

COLOSSIANS

Paul may have never personally been to Colossae (Colossians 2:1), but he had interacted with them via fellow believers (Colossians 4:10). Paul emphasized the significance of Christ instead of the myriad philosophies that Colossae found itself being drawn into. Some false teachers were Judaizers claiming that Gentiles must become Jews before converting to Christianity while continuing to follow Jewish practices. The other false teachers were Gnostics (from the Greek term “gnosis” – to know) that based their beliefs on secret knowledge and the belief that flesh was wicked (so Jesus could not be fully God and fully man).

Probable Chronology of Paul's Letters		
Epistle/Letter	Date	Location of Writing
1. Galatians	48AD	Syria, Antioch
2. 1 Thessalonians	50AD	Corinth
3. 2 Thessalonians	50AD	Corinth
4. 1 Corinthians	55AD	Ephesus
5. 2 Corinthians	56AD	Macedonia
6. Romans	57AD	Corinth
Letters from House Arrest		
7. Colossians	Early 60's	Rome
8. Ephesians	Early 60's	Rome
9. Philemon	Early 60's	Rome
10. Philippians	63AD	Rome
Letters After Release from House Arrest		
11. 1 Timothy	63AD	Macedonia
12. Titus	63AD	Ephesus
13. 2 Timothy	64AD	Rome

Colossae a producer of black and dyed wool (purple and scarlet). The volcanic soil resulted in exceptional pasture land with chalky water that served the dyeing process. Colossae was an active commercial center before Paul's day; however, after the Romans built the Via Ignatia (their major east-west highway) which bypassed Colossae, it declined substantially. Colossae was destroyed several times due to volcanic activity throughout its history; the latest time being 64A.D. according to Eusebius.

Colossae was located 100 miles east of Ephesus on the Lycus River (a tributary of the Maeander River). In the valley where Colossae was located, there were several small cities where Epaphras started churches: Hierapolis (6 miles away) and Laodicea (10 miles away). During Paul's third missionary journey, he had lived in Ephesus for 3 years and converted Epaphras. Epaphras traveled to Rome to report on false teachers infiltrating Colossae; although Paul had never visited these churches, he responded with a sharp rebuke to Colossae.

While the book of Ephesians was written for the general area of Ephesus, the book of Colossians was written to the specific church of Colossae where the false teachers may have begun. Similar to Ephesians, Colossians was written (in part) in response to the effects of Gnosticism on the young church in Asia Minor. Gnosticism promoted works righteousness while Paul emphasized

man’s despair and God’s grace; man is not saved because of himself in any way, but instead, man is saved by God’s will and grace.

Over one third of the words in Colossians are in Ephesians. It has been estimated that 75 of the 155 verses in Ephesians have a parallel passage in Colossians. Paul wrote both books while in prison (in Rome). Both books (along with Philemon) were delivered by Paul's friend Tychicus and sent to the same area (Asia Minor). Both books emphasize Christ as head of the church while encouraging proper Christian living. Colossians is a hard-hitting, terse letter while Paul takes a little more time to develop the truths in Ephesians. The sentences in Ephesians tend to be longer while the sentences in Colossians tend to be shorter.

Exact Phrases Repeated between Ephesians & Colossians	
Ephesians 1:1a	Colossians 1:1a
Ephesians 1:1b	Colossians 1:2a
Ephesians 1:2a	Colossians 1:2b
Ephesians 1:13	Colossians 1:5
Ephesians 2:1	Colossians 2:13
Ephesians 2:5b	Colossians 2:13c
Ephesians 4:1b	Colossians 1:10a
Ephesians 6:21, 22	Colossians 4:7-9

Similar Phrases Referenced between Ephesians & Colossians	
Ephesians 1:21	Colossians 1:16
Ephesians 2:1	Colossians 1:13
Ephesians 2:16	Colossians 1:20
Ephesians 3:7a	Colossians 1:23d, 25a
Ephesians 3:8	Colossians 1:27
Ephesians 4:2	Colossians 3:12
Ephesians 4:29	Colossians 3:8, 4:6
Ephesians 5:15	Colossians 4:5
Ephesians 5:19, 20	Colossians 3:16



9 Colossians 1

Read Colossians 1:1-2 ... Introduction to the Believers in Colossae

1:1 Paul immediately established his authority as an apostle by “the will of God.” (Dia thelēmatos theou - δια θελήματος θεοῦ).

- The name “Saul” means “called of God” was replaced in Scripture by “Paul” which means “little”. This might speak of Paul’s humble attitude as the least of the apostles.

- It is possible that Saul (the name used with the Jews) had always used the name Paul (a Roman form of the same name) among the Gentiles.
 - Found in Thessalonica dating to the second century AD, there is a physical description of Paul: short, bald, bow-legged, bushy “unibrow” and protruding eyes.
 - At the beginning of Paul’s second missionary journey, he traveled to Lystra (“that dissolves/disperses”) where Paul was stoned until thought to be dead (Acts 14:19; 2 Tim 3:11). At this place of dreadful persecution, Paul discovered his most faithful attendant, Timothy (“to honor God”) who was most likely led to Christ by Paul during the first missionary journey (1 Cor 4:17; 1 Tim 1:2; 2 Tim 1:2). Although Timothy’s mother (2 Tim 1:5), Eunice (“good victory/conquering well”), was a believing Jew (2 Tim 3:15). Timothy represented the convergence of the church as the Jew (his mother) and the Gentile (his father) were a single family bearing him. (Acts 16:1-5)
 - The term “Christ” (Χριστοῦ) means anointed one for a special purpose or mission. Christ carries the meaning of Messiah from a sacrificial, “suffering servant lifestyle to the point of death.”
 - The name “Jesus” (meaning “God is Salvation”) was given by an angel to Joseph (Matthew 1:21) and to Mary (Luke 1:31). This name of Jesus represents the humanity of Jesus.
 - The Greek term for “apostle” (ἀπόστολος) means to “to send with official authority” as Christ’s representatives. Paul repeatedly asserts his apostolic authority (1 Corinthians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Ephesians 1:1; Galatians 1:1; 1 Timothy 1:1; 2 Timothy 1:1)
 - The Greek term for “God’s people” (ἁγίους) is the term for “saints” which originated with the term “holy” (to be set apart for God’s service – as in “sanctuary”). The term “saint” is not associated with man’s goodness, but is defined by God’s goodness imputed to man. A saint is a “separated one to an assigned task.” (Rom 1:7, 15:25-26, 1 Cor 1:2, 14:33, 2 Cor 1:1, Philippians 4:21)
- 1:2 Peace follows the grace of God. The Greek term for “father” (πατρός) reflects an intimate family connection and interpersonal relationship.
- The Greek term for “God’s people” (ἁγίους) is the term for “saints” which originated with the term “holy” (to be set apart for God’s service – as in “sanctuary”). The term “saint” is not associated with man’s goodness, but is defined by God’s goodness imputed to man. A saint is a “separated one to an assigned task.” (Romans 1:7, 15:25-26, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 14:33, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 4:21)
 - The Greek term for “faithful” (πίστοις) means that the believer is trusting the work of God in Christ.

Read Colossians 1:3-5 ... Paul Thanks God for the Faith, Hope & Love of Colossae

- Philippians 1:3-8 is a single sentence.

1:3 The Greek term for “Lord” (Κυρίου) comes from Israel’s Old Testament covenantal name of God. Israel was reluctant to use the name “Yahweh” (YHWH

יהוה), so Israel substituted the name “Adonai” (אֲדֹנָי) which means “Lord.” The use of the word “Lord” asserts the full deity of Jesus.

- The word “Lord” was used for the Roman emperor in Biblical times. Many early believers died because they would not say “Caesar is Lord” while burning incense to him. They believed that only the Lord Jesus should be worshipped.
- Paul repeatedly discusses “thanksgiving” (eucharistia εὐχαριστία) as a theme of Colossians (1:12, 2:7; 3:15, 17; 4:6)

1:4-5 Paul repeatedly focuses on three areas of the Christian life: Faith, Hope and Love. (Romans 5:2-5; 1 Corinthians 13:13; Galatians 5:5-6; Ephesians 4:2-5; 1 Thessalonians 1:3, 5:8)

- “In Christ” as He is the sphere and context of every Christian (Galatians 3:26, 5:6; Ephesians 1:15).
- Colossae had a selfless, godly love (agapēn ἀγάπην) for all (pantas πάντας) believers in the family of God (including Gentiles).
- The term for “hope” in the New Testament typically refers to the “Parousia” (παρουσία) which is the second coming of Jesus when the lost will be judged and His people rewarded. Paul used the “Parousia” as an impetus and motivation for godly lifestyles. (Philippians 2:15)
 - The Greek view of “hope” is the certainty of an event without knowing the time of the event.
- The concept of being “stored up” (apokeimenēn ἀποκειμένην) are the eternal blessings that are “guarded” for each believer (1 Peter 1:4).
- Paul testifies that Epaphras shared the true gospel with Colossae.

Read Colossians 1:6-8 ... Epaphras Reports on the Church of Colossae to Paul

1:6 Just as Colossae heard the gospel (as has every believer), they were expected to share the gospel message throughout the world.

- The gift of salvation is from God’s grace alone – not from man’s efforts.
- Although the Gnostics were promoting a secret knowledge of the relative few, the true gospel had already been understood/known (ερεγνῶτε ἐπέγνωτε) and shared.
 - Jesus is the way. In order to reach God, there are no secret processes or passages, it is only through Jesus.

1:7 Epaphras (meaning “loving” or “foamy”) is characterized as a “fellow bond-servant” (syndoulou συνδούλου) which Paul esteemed as a co-worker. (Ephesians 3:6; Philemon 1:23).

- Epaphras was a gentile (Colossians 4:11) from Colossae (Colossians 4:12) who traveled to Rome to give news to Paul of the Colossians church (Colossians 1:8). Epaphras evangelized Colossae (Colossians 1:6-7) and prayed for them. (Colossians 4:12-13). Epaphras was imprisoned while visiting Paul in Rome (Philemon 1:23).
- The Greek term for “minister” (diakonos διάκονος) is the root word for “deacon.” The term “deacon” originated with the concept of “to raise dust” which infers a menial household servant.
 - Deacons were one of two leading groups of the local body of believers with the other being preachers (elders/bishops). (Philippians 1:1; Acts 6:1-6)

1:8 The Greek term for “love” (agapēn ἀγάπην) is repeated in the New Testament 33 times and equated to God’s selfless giving love which occurred through the power of the Spirit.

- This is the only mention of the Holy Spirit in the book of Colossians in reference to the selfless love that He empowered in the Colossae church. The fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23) are the characteristics of love.

Read Colossians 1:9-14 ... Paul Continually Prays for the Church in Colossae

- Philippians 1:9-14 is a single sentence.

1:9 Paul repeatedly focuses on the “filling” of the believer; Paul’s prayer is for Colossae “to be filled” (plērōthēte πληρωθήτε). (Ephesians 1:23; 3:19; 4:13; Colossians 2:9)

- Paul prays for Colossae to be filled with knowledge (epignōsin ἐπίγνωσιν). In the Greek language, the prefix “epi” is an intensifier (as in “epitome”). Therefore, the Greek word for “knowledge” (gnosis γνῶσις) is being expanded to epignōsin (full and complete knowledge). This is a play on words because the false teachers were only gnostics while genuine believers have epignōsin (complete knowledge).

1:10 Outcomes of the knowledge (epignōsei ἐπίγνωσει) of God include living a worthy life; pleasing God; bearing fruit in good works. (Ephesians 5:10)

- A personal relationship with Jesus leads to an enhanced doctrine and a pure lifestyle.
- Although God loves all of His children, this verse shows that God can be displeased or pleased with His children. (1 Corinthians 7:32; 2 Corinthians 5:9; Galatians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 2:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:1)

1:11 While man cannot empower himself, God empowers His people with the right attitude and action (Ephesians 4:19; Philippians 4:13)

- The terms “endurance and patience” are used together in Scripture several times. (2 Corinthians 6:4, 6; 2 Timothy 3:10; James 5:7-11)
- The Greek term “endurance” (hypomonēn ὑπομονήν) means to actively persevere and keep going through challenges (Romans 2:7, 5:3; 2 Thessalonians 3:5; 1 Timothy 6:11; James 1:3, 5:11; Revelation 2:3).
- The Greek term for “patience” (makrothymian μακροθυμίαν) means to maintain an attitude of longsuffering. (Colossians 3:12; 1 Timothy 1:16; 2 Peter 3:15). “Longsuffering” suggests that an individual has the power for revenge, but chooses not to retaliate.
- The Greek term for “power” (dynamei δυνάμει) is the root word for “dynamite.”

1:12 Joy is a characteristic of God’s people even amid suffering and persecution (James 1:2-3; 1 Peter 4:13).

- The Greek term for “inheritance” (klērou κλήρου) means to share His lot. The reference is to an “allotted” inheritance distributed by casting lots (1 Peter 1:3-4).
 - Israel cast lots for their land boundaries after defeating the Canaanite kings (Joshua 14-19).
- Believers have a “foretaste” of what is to come as God has already blessed His people (Ephesians 2:5-6)
- The “kingdom of light” (enlightenment) reflects God’s truth (Ephesians 5:6-14).

1:13 God has brought His people out of the darkness into Jesus’ Kingdom

- The Greek term “delivered” (errysato ἐρρύσατο) means to be “rescued.” (2 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Timothy 3:11; 2 Peter 2:7).
 - The Greek term for “dominion” (exousias ἐξουσίας) means “domain” or “legal right.” God rescued His people from the domain and authority of darkness. (Luke 22:53).
 - God’s people were resettled/relocated into the kingdom of Jesus (Matthew 3:17, 17:5) – the kingdom of the Son (basileian tou huiou – βασιλείαν τοῦ υἱοῦ). God’s people are citizens of the kingdom of God. (Philippians 3:20).
- 1:14 The Greek term for “redemption” (apolytrōsin ἀπολύτρωσιν) is used six times in Scripture, and it means to ransom someone and buy them back from slavery/imprisonment. (Romans 8:23; Ephesians 1:7, 14; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:15, 11:35). The payment was the blood of Christ on the cross (Isaiah 53:11-12; Mark 10:45).
- Some scholars believe that Colossians 1:14-18 is an ancient hymn because it is very rhythmical. (Hebrews 1:1-4; 1 Peter 2:22-24)

Read Colossians 1:15-20 ... The Lord Jesus is Sovereign

- The Identity of Jesus: 1. Fully God 2. Accomplishments in Creation & Redemption 3. Head of the Church
- 1:15 God the Son is the exact likeness of the invisible God the Father. (John 1:18, 14:9).
- The Greek term for “likeness” (eikon εἰκὼν) is pronounced “icon.” (2 Corinthians 4:6)
 - Jesus is the exact character of God the Father to the most minute detail (Hebrews 1:3). Jesus is the full embodiment of deity (God incarnate). Jesus is God and can never be anything less; although he put on humanity as well.
 - The Greek term for “firstborn” (prōtotokos πρωτότοκος) which has several Jewish connotations.
 - The Rabbi’s utilized the term to speak of pre-eminence.
 - The Old Testament uses the term to characterize the eldest son (Time) as heir (Rank) and manager of the family (Responsibility).
 - The term is used to describe the Messiah (Psalm 89:27; Hebrew 1:6)
- 1:16-17 *“All things have been created through Him and for Him; He is before all things, and by Him all things hold together.”* (John 1:3)
- Wisdom is God the Father’s agent of creation (Proverbs 8:22).
 - Everything is “in” (en ἐν) Him, “through” (di’ δι’) Him (1 Corinthians 8:6), and “for” (eis εἰς) Him. (Romans 11:36; Ephesians 1:10)
 - Jesus is the Creator of matter/material and spirit/spiritual. (Romans 8:38-39; 1 Corinthians 2:8; Ephesians 1:21, 6:12; Colossians 1:16, 2:10, 15)
- 1:17 At the center of every atom are multiple protons (positive forces) that should push away from each other, but instead, they hold together by the “nuclear binding force.” Scientists have no answer as to the origin or methodology of the nuclear binding force.
- Jesus was pre-existent before all of Creation. (John 8:58, 17:5; Hebrews 10:5-7)
 - Jesus sustains all things (Hebrews 1:3)

- 1:18 The Lord Jesus is the head while believers make up the body of Christ (Colossians 2:19; Ephesians 1:22-23; 4:15)
- Beyond His prominence in creation, He was also eminent in redemption as He overcame death. (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). Because of Jesus, there is physical life and spiritual life. (1 John 5:11; 2 Timothy 1:1; Colossians 3:4)
- 1:19 The will of God the Father was that the fullness of divinity (Ephesians 1:23, 3:19, 4:13; Colossians 2:9) dwell in the Lord Jesus. (Philippians 2:6-7) The Greek term for “dwell” (katoikēsai κατοικῆσαι) was translated “shekinah” (שכינה) in Hebrew.
- 1:20 Jesus’s death was God’s plan of reconciliation to Himself; reconciliation entails changing man’s relationship to God (not God’s relationship to man).
- Reconciliation changes the relationship from hostility to peace/favor.

Read Colossians 1:21-23 ... The Reconciliation of Colossae to God

- 1:21 The Greek term for “estranged” (apēllotriōmenous ἀπηλλοτριωμένους) means alienated. (Ephesians 2:11-22, 4:18) The etymology is rooted in “transferring” to another owner. (Colossians 1:13)
- There was hostility with God because of the sinful (selfish) rebellion of men against God (Romans 8:7).
- 1:22 Reconciliation brings peace instead of hostility – unity instead of division (2 Corinthians 5:18-21).
- The Gnostic false teachers believed that matter was evil, so Paul refutes this belief in that Christ’s “physical body” was the conduit of the believer’s redemption.
 - There will be no accusations made against the sin of believers. (Zechariah 3:1-5)
 - The concept of presenting believers before God applies to the present and the future:
 - At the moment of salvation, the believer is introduced to God the Father (Ephesians 1:4; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
 - In the future (eschatologically), believers will be introduced as glorified to the Father (Colossians 1:28; Ephesians 5:27)
 - The Greek term for “holy” (hagious ἁγίου) is the term for “saints” (to be set apart for God’s service – as in “sanctuary”). The term “saint” is not associated with man’s goodness, but is defined by God’s goodness imputed to man.
 - A saint is a “separated one to an assigned task.” (Romans 1:7, 15:25-26, 1 Corinthians 1:2, 14:33, 2 Corinthians 1:1, Philippians 4:21)
- 1:23 Believers respond to an initial call from God which grows into lifestyle faith and repentance which shows the validity of the initial decision.
- The Greek term “if” (Ei Ei) can be read as “since” (Romans 8:31; Matthew 4:3), so God knows that they will continue in the faith.
 - Faith can equate to “the belief of a doctrine” or “an individual’s commitment to that doctrinal belief.”
 - Well-grounded believers are based on the foundation (Matthew 7:25) of the Lord (1 Corinthians 3:11). Colossae was built near a volcano, so it was materially important to build on an adequate foundation.
 - The Greek term for “servant” (diakonois διακόνους) is the root word for “deacon” which means to minister and serve. The term literally meant “for a servant to raise dust” (sweep).

Read Colossians 1:24-29 ... Paul's Labors for the Mystery of the Church

1:24 Suffering has a purpose for the church (Ephesians 3:13; Matthew 5:10-12; Romans 5:3; 2 Corinthians 4:7-11, 6:3-10; 1 Peter 1:7-8, 4:12-19).

- The benefits of suffering:
 - The church knows Christ better by suffering like Him. (John 16:1; 2 Corinthians 4:10; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 3:10)
 - The church matures in Christ by suffering as He did (Hebrews 5:8)
 - The end times might have a threshold of suffering (as in labor), so the more suffering that occurs, the quicker the second coming happens. (Mark 13:8)
 - When the believing body of Christ suffers, Jesus suffers (Acts 9:4-5; Isaiah 63:9)
 - As believers identify with Christ, their suffering increases (John 16:1)

1:25 Paul was called into the mission field (Colossians 1:23), and yet it is an esteemed position to be an apostle of Jesus. (1 Timothy 3:1)

1:26 God commissioned Paul to be a steward of the Gospel. (1 Corinthians 4:1-5; Titus 1:7; 1 Peter 4:10)

1:27 The Greek term for “mystery” (mystērion μυστήριον) means God’s plan before time began which was not revealed until the coming of the Messiah – the Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 3:1-6)

- The Greek term for “riches” is used repeatedly in the book of Ephesians. (Ephesians 1:7, 18, 2:7, 3:8, 16).
- The Son of God indwells His people. (Matthew 28:20; Romans 8:9; 2 Corinthians 3:17; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 3:17; Philippians 1:19)

1:28 The focus of Paul’s message was the Lord Jesus Christ. The Greek term “admonishing” (nouthetountes νουθετοῦντες) means to warn both Jews and Greeks. (Colossians 3:16). The Gnostics believed that only a select few had special knowledge, but the gospel is available to all men.

- Believers are maturing towards the image of God the Son (Genesis 1:26; Galatians 4:19; 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:29; 2 Corinthians 3:18; Ephesians 4:24)
- The Greek term “present” (parastēsōmen παρστήσωμεν) describes confidence to come into God’s presence. Paul repeatedly speaks of the boldness to come before God the Father. (Ephesians 3:12, 6:10; Hebrew 4:16, 10:19, 35).

1:29 The Greek term for “striving” (agōnizomenos ἀγωνιζόμενος) is the root word for agony and can apply in an athletic or military event. (1 Timothy 4:10)

- The Greek term for “working” (energoumenēn ἐνεργουμένην) has the same root word as “energy” (energeian ἐνέργειαν).
- God’s power works through His people (Ephesians 1:19, 3:7, 20; Philippians 3:14, 21)
- The Greek term for “power” (dynamēi δυνάμει) is the root word for “dynamite.”

10 Colossians 2

Read Colossians 2:1-3... Paul's Labors for Colossae & Laodicea

2:1 Paul’s efforts for the churches included teaching and prayer.

- Laodicea was only 10 miles from Colossae in the Lycus River Valley (Colossians 4:13, 15,16; Revelation 3:14)
 - Paul supported churches that were started by other evangelists; these churches had not met Paul, and they had been started by Epaphras (Colossians 1:7).
- 2:2 The Greek term “may be encouraged” (paraklēthōsin παρακληθῶσιν) is used of the Holy Spirit (John 14:16,26; 15:26; 16:7) and of Jesus (1 John 2:1).
- The unity of “being knit together” (symbibasthentes συμβιβασθέντες) is based on the same selfless love (agape ἀγάπη) that God has for His people.
 - Believers are blessed with understanding that the mystery (the gospel includes Jew and Gentile) (Ephesians 3:17-18).
 - In the Greek language, the prefix “epi” is an intensifier (as in “epitome”). Therefore, the Greek word for “knowledge” (gnosis γνῶσις) is being expanded to epignōsin (full and complete knowledge). This is a play on words because the false teachers were only Gnostics (“knowledge”) while genuine believers have epignōsin (complete knowledge).
- 2:3 All the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are stored in Christ. The terms “wisdom and knowledge” are repeatedly used together (Colossians 1:9; Romans 11:33)

Read Colossians 2:4-8... Beware of False Teachers of Anything Other Than Christ

- 2:4 Paul warns the church of deceivers with well-crafted arguments (1 Corinthians 2:1-5).
- “Anything that you can talk a man into, another man can talk him out of.”
- 2:5 Paul uses two military terms to describe how well they are doing. (1 Corinthians 5:3).
- The military terms “good order” (taxin τάξιν) and “firmness/steadfastness” (stereōma στερέωμα) show that Paul realizes the churches are in a spiritual battle. (Ephesians 6:10-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:3; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5)
- 2:6 These churches received Jesus as Savior and Lord. Paul encourages the believers not to forget their first love that is Christ Jesus the Lord. Sequencing “Christ” first in the name emphasizes the Messiah (as the suffering servant) in humanity as Lord.
- The Gnostics denied the humanity of Christ since they believed flesh was innately wicked.
- 2:7 Every action of a believer is founded and based upon Christ which results in gratitude towards God.
- 2:8 Believers should be wary and on guard against manmade philosophies and personal beliefs (Colossians 2:4).
- The Greek term for “captive” (sylogōgōn συλαγωγῶν) means to be “enslaved,” “seduced” or “kidnapped.” - to be someone’s prey. (2 Timothy 3:6)
 - Manmade beliefs follow societal norms, traditions and reasoning. (Isaiah 29:13) The source determines the validity, and false teachers speculate without the Spirit or God’s Word.

Read Colossians 2:9-15... Christ’s Sacrificial Reconciliation of Sinners to God

- 2:9 “*For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form.*” (God incarnate)
- While the early heretics (Gnostics) doubted the humanity of Jesus, the modern heretics embrace the humanity of Jesus, but doubt His deity. (John 1:13; 1 John 1, Philipians 2:6-10)

- 2:10 Believers are filled with the Spirit of God and are able to act out the will of God in His power. (Colossians 1:27; John 1:16; Ephesians 3:17-19).
- Gnostics believed that there were various levels of angelic authority, but the Lord Jesus has authority over all spiritual powers. (Colossians 1:16; Ephesians 1:21-22)
- 2:11 The spiritual circumcision speaks to our faithful dedication to Christ (Genesis 17:11; Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6; Jeremy 4:4; Romans 2:29).
- Everything that a believer has is made possible “in Him” (through union with Christ).
 - Judaizers believed that circumcision (Genesis 12:15, 17) was a requirement prior to becoming a Christian. In reality, circumcision was intended to be an outward sign of an inner change. (Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6; Jeremiah 4:4) Old Testament material realities often pointed to greater spiritual truths. (Romans 2:28-29; Philippians 3:3)
 - The old, dominant, sinful nature is taken off when a believer comes to Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:21)
- 2:12 The baptism of the believer reflects the death to the old self and the newness of a Christ centered life (Romans 6:4). Baptism is a public profession of faith (Matthew 28:18-20).
- Salvation does not occur by man’s efforts, but only through “*the working of God.*” (Energeias tou theou - ἐνεργείας τοῦ θεοῦ)
 - Baptism testifies to existing faith, and one’s faith brings validity to the baptism. (Romans 4:11)
- 2:13 Man was spiritually dead (Ephesians 2:1) If “spiritual death” is not remedied before “physical death,” the sinner is doomed to “eternal death.” (Revelation 20:6, 14)
- Although the individual may not have been physically circumcised, God forgave the individual’s sin. (Psalm 103:12; Jeremiah 31:44; Isaiah 38:17, 44:22; Micah 7:19)
 - Believers are called to forgive as Jesus forgives (Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13)
- 2:14 The final word of Jesus on the cross was “tetelestai” (τετέλεσται) meaning “it is finished” and the “debt is paid in full.” (John 19:28, 30). This is also the last word (‘ā·śāh תָּמַל) in the prophetic Psalm 22:31 meaning “*He has done it.*”
- Every man has broken the Mosaic Law, but Jesus paid the price for man’s sin. The law was nailed to the cross, so that believers are no longer under the law (Romans 10:4, 6:14). Also nailed on the cross above Jesus was His charge – “*King of the Jews.*” (Matthew 27:37; Mark 15:2; John 19:21).
 - The cross was a way of being cursed by God (Deuteronomy 21:23), but Jesus took the curse for sinners (Galatians 3:13).
- 2:15 The Greek term for “disarmed” (apekdysamenos ἀπεκδυσάμενος) means that Jesus stripped the spiritual beings of their powers against Him. (Ephesians 6:11-12)
- The idea of making a public spectacle of “powers and authorities” as their conqueror references Rome’s triumphant parades where Romans would line the streets to praise the conquering general who marched the captives of his conquest through the streets.
 - The conquering hero rode on white horses with a crown on his head while his soldiers marched those who were enslaved behind him. The Roman

citizens would hold Roman censers on the side of the road (parade route) to give honor to the conquering hero.

- Christ was hung on the cross above a thoroughfare into Jerusalem at Passover, but instead of witnessing His defeat, both the spiritual and physical world witnessed His power and victory on the cross.

Read Colossians 2:16-23... Freedom from Rituals that Point to Greater Spiritual Truths

2:16 Christian “mechanics” (symbols, feasts, etc.) point to deeper, spiritual meanings which culminate with the Lord Jesus Christ. The “heart of the problem” is an evil heart; creation isn’t the issue, but the issue is how wicked man pollutes creation (Romans 14:17, 21; 1 Timothy 4:3).

2:17 *“These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.”*

- Christ is the “end goal,” and not the rituals or icons themselves.

2:18 Believers should worship God alone. These individuals in false humility create manmade imaginations of spiritual truths that are not compatible with God’s Word nor do they worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

2:19 The false teachers are not Jesus-oriented or Christ focused. The false teacher has gone their own way away from Christ as the head. The results of false teachers are manmade efforts instead of God powered growth.

2:20 Having died with Christ to this world, believers should not let themselves become subject to the whims and societal criticisms of the chaotic world system.

- Believers are not rules-motivated, but instead, believers are Christ powered through love towards God and others.

2:21 Paul lists legalistic examples of false teachers putting false requirements on believers. Christ gives freedom to believers. Believers should be motivated by love instead of lists of “dos and don’ts.”

2:22 Creation was called “good” by the Creator God; however, man has perverted God’s creation (Matthew 15:10-20; Mark 7:19; Romans 14:17, 21)

2:23 Man’s self-effort towards getting right with God appears wise and valid, but self-imposed (manmade) rules and guidelines are worldly (world-centered) instead of God-focused. Manmade rules and biases keep the world from Christ.

- The lists of manmade regulations are a barrier instead of a bridge to spiritual maturity.

11 Colossians 3

- Transition from the review of doctrine to the practical application that is present in Paul’s letters.
- Colossians 2:20-23 relate to false Christianity based on man’s works; the moral lists had the outward form of godliness, but they didn’t bring an individual any closer to God Himself.
- Paul utilizes clothing and relationships as metaphors for a believer’s interaction with God.

Read Colossians 3:1-4... Concentrate on Spiritual Matters Instead of Earthly Things

- 3:1 The right hand of God is an anthropomorphic image that references the Old Testament verse that is most frequently repeated in the New Testament (Psalm 110:1).
- Jesus is sitting at the right hand of God (Mark 16:19; Luke 22:69; Acts 7:55; Ephesus 1:20; Hebrews 10:12, 12:2), but stands to welcome His faithful servant in (Romans 8:34; 1 Peter 3:22).
 - The right hand is a metaphor of power and authority.
 - While remaining in this material world, believers have died to the old self and resurrected with Christ resulting in life above the things of this world.
 - Believers should have a spiritual perspective on life with identities of being children of the King.
- 3:2 Believers should purposefully focus on spiritual realities instead of temporal worldly situations (Philippians 4:8).
- 3:3 A Christian has died in relation to self and sin; believers live in Christ’s power and for His purposes (Galatians 2:20; Romans 8:36; Philippians 1:21, 29; Matthew 10:39; 1 Corinthians 15:31; John 12:25)
- 3:4 Christ is the Messiah that lived as the “suffering servant” – even to the point of death (John 14:6). Believers are also called to live selfless lives of services.
- Every believer will have a resurrected, glorified body in eternity. (1 John 3:2; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8; Philippians 1:23)
 - The “Parousia” (παρουσία) is the second coming of Jesus when the lost will be judged and His people rewarded. Paul used the “Parousia” as an impetus and motivation for godly lifestyles. (Philippians 2:15)

Read Colossians 3:5-11... Believers Should Rid Their Lives of Sin

- 3:5 Believers have died to their old sinful life (Romans 6:6); the old nature becomes inoperative. While old inclinations and desires may continue, there is new strength in His Spirit
- Greed is idolatry and sexual sins are a sign of greed (Prov 15:27; Is 57:17; Jer 6:13, 8:10; Lk 12:15; Eph 5:3; 2 Pet 2:14 → 1 Cor 10:14; 1 Peter 4:3). The self-serving greedy individual will not inherit the Kingdom of God (1 Cor 6:10; Eph 5:5)

(Self-seeking) Characteristics of the Old Sinful Nature The World’s Counterfeit “Love” (Colossians 3:5)	
Sexual immorality	Porneian (πορνείαν) the root word of pornography
Impurity	Akatharsian (ἀκαθαρσίαν) means to be dirty minded
Lust	Pathos (πάθος) means uncontrollable passion
Evil Desires	Epithymian (ἐπιθυμίαν) extends beyond sexual imaginations
Greed/Idolatry	Pleonexian (πλεονεξίαν) means insatiable coveting

- Idolatry is anything that man prioritizes over God to be manipulated for man’s self-seeking use. Greed and coveting are idolatry. (Ephesians 5:5)
- 3:6 Sin always has negative consequences (James 1:15; Galatians 6:7) God’s wrath can occur in this world or at the end time’s judgment (Romans 1:18-2:16)

- 3:7 The believers of Colossae were called out of paganistic lives (Romans 6:19; 1 Corinthians 6:11; Titus 3:3).
- 3:8 Throughout Scripture, righteousness (self & God's) was symbolized by clothing. Paul urges Colossae to lay aside their old garments (Colossians 3:8,9; Ephesians 4:22,25,31; James 1:21; 1 Peter 2:1) and clothe themselves with Christ (Colossians 3:10,12,14; Ephesians 4:24; Romans 13:14; Galatians 3:27)

(Hateful) Characteristics of the Old Sinful Nature The World's Counterfeit "Strength" (Colossians 3:8)	
Anger	Orgēn (ὀργήν) implies a slow, smoldering annoyance
Rage	Thymon (θυμόν) implies a fast fury
Malice	Kakian (κακίαν) means evil thoughts towards pain
Slander	Blasphēmian (βλασφημίαν) includes insulting speech
Filthy Language	Aischrologian (αἰσχρολογία) includes abusive speech

- 3:9 "Do not lie to each other." (Exodus 20:16; Leviticus 19:11; Proverbs 6:16-19; 12:22; 19:9; Ephesians 4:25; Zephaniah 3:13; Revelation 21:8) The devil is the "father of lies." (John 8:44)
- 3:10 A believer no longer follows the old nature as the new man as ongoing sanctification and renewal into the likeness of Jesus Christ (Gen 1:26-27; Rom 8:29; 1 Cor 11:7, 15:49, 2 Cor 3:18). Believers are to be images of heavenly things on earth (Ex 20:4); this is a "spiritual" image instead of a physical one (Deuteronomy 4:15-16)

Salvation includes:		
Initial Act	Romans 8:24	Justification
Current Process	Ephesians 8:24	Sanctification
Future Fulfillment	1 Corinthians 15:2	Glorification

- 3:11 Christians live the selfless and sacrificial life of Jesus; He is the believer's prevailing identity instead of other characteristics. All human barriers are eliminated in Christ (Galatians 3:27-28).

Human Categories Disappear in the Body of Believers:	
Greek or Jew	No Racial Discrimination
Circumcised or Uncircumcised	No Ceremonial/Accomplishment Discrimination
Barbarian or Scythian	No Distinction in Sinners (Language or Savage Terrorist)
Slave or Free	No Caste System

- The believer's life purposefully prioritizes Christ in everything as believers live for Christ alone.

Read Colossians 3:12-17... Believers Are to Live Christlike Lives

- 3:12 Although they have a position in Christ, believers must act on that position. God provides the weapons for spiritual battle, but the believer must take them up and put them on (Ephesians 6:10-17).

Christlike Attitudes Towards Others: (Colossians 3:12; Ephesians 4:2)		
Compassion	Oiktirmou (οἰκτιρμοῦ)	2 Cor. 6:12; Phil. 1:8; 2:1; Philemon 7,12,20
Kindness	Chrēstotēta (χρηστότητα)	Rom. 2:4; 9:23; 11:22; 2 Cor. 6:6; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:12; Titus 3:4

Humility	Ταπεινοφροσύνην (ταπεινοφροσύνην)	Eph. 4:2; Phil. 2:3
Gentleness	Πραυτῆτα (πραῦτητα)	1 Cor. 4:21; 2 Cor. 10:1; Gal. 5:23; 6:1; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Tim. 6:11; 2 Tim. 2:25
Patience	Μακροθυμίαν (μακροθυμίαν)	1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22; Eph. 4:2; 2 Tim. 4:2

- Tenderheartedness literally means the “bowels of compassion.” In ancient days, they believed that the source of emotion was the bowels (much like the heart in modern times).
 - The Greeks considered humility a weak characteristic. In Scripture, two people are identified as humble: Moses (Numbers 12:3) and Jesus (Matthew 11:29; Philippians 2:8).
- 3:13 Christians are forgiven unconditionally and must forgive others (Matthew 6:14-15; Mark 11:25-26, Luke 6:37 → Matthew 18:21-35)
- 3:14 The foundation of everything that a Christian does is LOVE (Matthew 22:36-39; John 13:35; Romans 13:9; 1 Corinthians 13:13, 16:14; 1 Peter 4:8). Love brings unity. (Ephesians 4:2-3; 1 Corinthians 13; Galatians 5:22)
- 3:15 With the nativity announcement of Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem, the angels announced peace for those with whom God is pleased. (Luke 2:14) The peace of God does not depend on temporal worldly circumstances (Philippians 4:6)
- Godly gratitude is a sign of Christian maturity just as Paul was imprisoned when he wrote this letter (Colossians 3:17; Ephesians 5:20; 1 Thessalonians 5:18).
- 3:16 Even before David played the harp on the hillsides of Bethlehem; God’s people would learn Scripture through the singing of Scripture and spiritual truths.
- 3:17 “*Whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*” (Romans 14:23; 1 Thes 5:17)

Read Colossians 3:18-25... Selfless Lifestyles in Christian Households

- 3:18 Each time that the relationship of wife and husband is mentioned, the wife’s responsibility precedes the husband’s responsibility (Eph 5:22-6:9; Col 3:18-19; 1 Peter 3:1-7); however, this may not mean that the wife submission should be first and foremost. Husbands are commanded to love regardless of the behavior of the wives.
- Submission is not inequality (Ephesians 5:21).
 - The roles of husbands and wives are God-ordained for homelife.
- 3:19 Beyond loving them, men are warned to not become bitter against or harsh with their wives.
- Ancient culture devalued wives, children and slaves; however, Paul brought a balance with shared responsibilities to all parties.
- 3:20 While adults are given many directives, children are only called to obedience (1 Jn 5:2)
- 3:21 Fathers are explicitly called out not to discourage their children (Ephesians 6:4)
- 3:22 Slaves should be a testimony and witness with their work ethic (Titus 2:9; 1 Pet 2:18; Eph 6:5)
- 3:23 “*Whatever you do, do it enthusiastically, as something done for the Lord and not for men*” Everything that a believer does should be unto the Lord. (Romans 14:23)

- The incentive to act and respond towards others has nothing to do with them and everything to do with the believer's identity in the Lord.
- 3:24 Slaves did not receive a worldly inheritance which made this spiritual inheritance even more encouraging.
- *"It is the Lord Christ you are serving."* The "Lord" represents sovereign deity while "Christ" represents a "suffering servant" who came to die for his people.
- 3:25 There is accountability regardless of status or privilege; there is no favoritism in God's judgment.

12 Colossians 4

- Paul concludes the book of Colossians with the importance of Prayer (James 4:2-3)

Read Colossians 4:1-6... Live Prayerfully & Interact Graciously

- 4:1 Earthly masters are reminded that they are accountable to a heavenly master (Ephesus 6:9).
- This is a continuation of the previous chapter in which guidance was given to wives, husbands, children, fathers and slaves.
- 4:2 Believers should devote themselves to three actions: 1. Prayer 2. Watching for the return of Jesus 3. Thanksgiving (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
- On the night that Jesus was arrested, they were also asked to pray and be watchful (Mark 13:48)
 - Although Paul wrote this book from prison, he repeatedly encouraged his fellow believers to give thanks.
- 4:3 Paul understands the power of prayer, but he doesn't request personal comforts. Instead, Paul asks for prayer towards the ministry
- The "door" (thyran θύραν) may refer to opportunities or the actual doors of incarceration, so that Paul could continue to minister after being released from jail.
 - The Greek term for "mystery" (mystērion μυστήριον) refers to a "secret" that was hidden throughout time was that God has included into one body (the saints) the Gentiles with His covenant people, the Jews. (Colossians 1:27; Ephesians 3:3-9)
 - Having broken down the manmade barriers, there is only one manmade humanity in Christ.
- 4:4 Paul desired to have a clear (phanerōsō φανερώσω) message when sharing the gospel. Even the worldwide evangelist (Paul) understood that prayer and the power of God was needed for an effective message.
- 4:5 Paul emphasizes the importance of a lifestyle that aligns to one's testimony.
- *"In wisdom walk..."* (en sophia peripateite - ἐν σοφία περιπατεῖτε)
 - Believers should use prudence, and consider how to live for lifestyle evangelism in reaching others.
 - Believers should advance others towards Jesus in every situation. *"Make the most of every opportunity."*
- 4:6 Believers should capitalize on every opportunity to gracefully share the gospel with others

- Believers should understand and be able to convey the truths of the gospel. (1 Peter 3:15)
- Believers are to reflect the will of God (e.g., sharing the good news of Jesus).
There were two ways for Israel to harvest salt:
 - Pour sea water into pits. As the water evaporated, a residue of salt would be left.
 - Collect the salt from the Dead (Salt) Sea, but the salt was mixed with sand which often diminished the taste of salt. Unethical commercial practices included mixing valuable salt with worthless sand before selling as “pure salt.”

Characteristics of Salt Represent the Believer’s Responsibility (Matthew 5:13)		
Flavor	Col 4:6; Mk 9:49; Job 6:6; Jn 10:10	Impact; extracts the essence of life’s savor (abundant life).
Preservative	Ps 86:2, 121:7; Jer 50:20; 2 Tim 4:18; Jude 1:1	Extends the life and usefulness of the Believer
Antiseptic; Disinfectant	Ez 16:4; 2 Ki 2:20-21	Heals and restores the broken and hurting
Causes Thirst for Water	Jn 4:13-14	Intensifies the desire for living water (Jesus and His Word)
Additive to Sacrifices	Lev 2:13; Ezra 7:20-22; Ezekiel 43:24; Rom 12:1	Pleasing in God’s Sight
Sanction of Covenants	Num 18:19; 2 Chron 13:5	Incorruptible, imperishable and unchanging commitment.
Currency Medium; Value of Exchange	Ez 7:22; Mt 10:31; 12:12; 1 Cor 6:20, 7:23	The Latin word for salt and the Latin word for salary are the same word; salt was used as value and payment as in “worth your salt”

Read Colossians 4:7-9... Paul’s Delegation Bringing News

4:7 Tychicus was sent to share Paul’s status. Tychicus was described in three ways: 1. Dear brother 2. Faithful minister 3. Fellow servant

- The characteristics of being a minister and servant shows leadership among Paul’s companions.

4:8 Paul wants to encourage the church of Colossae

4:9 Onesimus was a native of Colossae as a slave of Philemon. Onesimus had joined Paul as a “*faithful and dear brother.*”

Paul’s Closer Companions		
Archippus	Philemon 2	A member of the Colossae church meeting in the house of Philemon
Aristarchus	Acts 19:29, 20:4, 27:2	Missionary through Macedonia
Barnabas	Acts 12:25, 13:5, 15:31-39	Acclimated Paul to the church & missions

Demas	2 Timothy 4:10	Abandoned Rome for Thessalonica
Epaphras	Colossians 1:7	Started the church of Colossae
Gaius	Acts 19:29; Romans 16:23	“Hosting” homes in Derbe & Corinth
Justus	Acts 18:7	Hosted the house church of Laodicea
Luke	2 Timothy 4:11	Missionary Physician
Mark	Acts 12:12	Peter’s sidekick; Cousin of Barnabas
Nympha	Colossians 4:15	A wealthy believer hosting the house church of Laodicea
Onesimus	Philemon 10	Carried the Letters to Colossians, Ephesians & Philemon (Slave of Philemon)
Tychicus	Ephesians 6:21-22	Carried the Letters to Colossians, Ephesians & Philemon
Timothy	Philippians 2:19-2	Kind Missionary
Titus	Titus 1:4; Galatians 2:1	Strong Missionary

Read Colossians 4:10-14... Paul’s Companions Send Their Greetings

4:10 Aristarchus was a fellow inmate who had traveled with Paul through Macedonia.

- John Mark was the son of a wealthy woman who hosted the church of Jerusalem in her house. (Acts 12:12) John Mark was the sidekick of Peter (1 Peter 5:13), and the cousin of Barnabas. Overcoming an earlier distrust, John Mark assisted Paul before he died. (2 Timothy 4:11)

4:11 Paul listed the greetings from the Jews to this point. Justus hosted the church of Colossians. (Acts 18:7)

- The Kingdom of God was the subject of most of the parables of Jesus. Believers are currently in the spiritual kingdom of God as they submit to the will of the King. In the millennium (and beyond), the King will physically rule.
- After this point, the Gentiles are listed.

4:12 Along the Lycus River valley, Epaphras had started the church in Colossae as well as other churches (Hierapolis and Laodicea). During Paul’s third missionary journey, he had lived in Ephesus for 3 years and converted Epaphras.

- The Greek term for “*struggling/wrestling*” (agōnizomenos ἀγωνιζόμενος) is a root word for “agony” with an athletic inference.

4:13 Colossae was located 100 miles east of Ephesus in the same Lycus River valley as Hierapolis (6 miles away) and Laodicea (10 miles away).

4:14 Luke, the physician, is listed among the Gentiles. Demas would eventually forsake Paul in the Roman prison as Demas traveled to Thessalonica (2 Timothy 4:10).

Faithfulness to the Ministry	
Luke	Consistently faithful to the end
John Mark	Fell away, but restored to the ministry
Demas	Dropped out of ministry

4:15 Nympha hosted the church home in Laodicea.

Read Colossians 4:16-18... Closing Comments & Personal Authentication

4:16 Paul calls on the church of Colossae to share his letters with neighboring churches (Laodicea). The letter from Laodicea may have been the book of Ephesians.

4:17 Archippus was a leader in the church of Colossae that met in the house of Philemon. (Philemon 1:2).

4:18 Paul emphasized that in spite of his physical incumbrances, he penned the letter himself. There may have been concerns of counterfeit letters. (2 Thessalonians 3:17)

- By mentioning the chains of Paul's incarceration, he subtly might be asking for any support that God might lead Colossae to support (prayer, visits, etc.)
- "Grace" is always a reminder of God's sovereign goodness and gifts.