

Colossians Study, pt.1

This evening we will embark on a new series that I am really excited about. We will be walking through the book of Colossians!

One of the reasons I am excited is because of the way we are going to do this study.

It will be a little different than how we normally approach our Wednesday night service.

We will examine the book of Colossians in a demonstrative bible study format.

By that I mean, as we walk through the letter to the Colossians, I am going to demonstrate how to do faithful bible study through a New Testament Letter.

One of the things Pop and I have said, repeatedly, is, “You need to be in the word! You need to be in the word! You need to be in the word!”

And what I do not want to be guilty of is exhorting you to get into the word without actually taking the time to show you how to do so.

What we are about here, as pastor-teachers, is to equip you with everything necessary so that you may be able to rightly handle the word of truth!

So, for the next few months, I want you to imagine that this sanctuary has transformed into a classroom and you are about to learn how to study the bible!

What you have in front of you is a printed copy of Colossians 1 (we will take our time walking through this one verse at a time.) We will only look at the greeting this evening.

You notice that it is doubled-spaced.

That is to provide you with space to write notes, circle and underline things that are important.

I will have Colossians 1 on the screen and will be making notes as we go.

I want you to take notes on what I am doing and engage in the text, as I do.

I will be sure to instruct and unfold the word as we go.

In addition to having Colossians 1, you have a document with terms and definitions.

This is for your reference to know key terms and ideas necessary to do faithful bible study.

Now, to begin our study, I want you to experience hearing the letter the same way that a first century saint would have heard.

When the saints in the first century would have received a letter from an apostle, someone would read the letter in its entirety. And they would have simply heard it read.

READ/RECITE THE LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

Now, when we come to New Testament letters, most of them have three main parts (every letter does not have these three, but most do. And these terms are on your document.)

They have:

1. **Greeting/Introduction**
2. **Body** (which is the main portion of the letter.)
3. **Salutation** (or a closing or departing statement.)

The book of Colossians has all three parts.

The **Greeting/Introduction** is found 1:1–2

The **Body** is 1:3–4:17

The **Salutation** is 4:18

We are going to only focus on the Greeting of this evening.

The Greetings of New Testament Letters generally have three parts as well.

These three parts are:

1. The Author's name (and sometimes the name of another brother)
2. The Audience
3. And a blessing

Colossians has all three parts of a Greeting.

- In v. 1, we have **Paul** as the Author
- The **Colossians** Christians as the Audience
- And the blessing in call in v. 2, where Paul says, “**Grace to you and peace from God our Father.**”

Before we get into the greeting of this letter, it is important for me to tell you that every New Testament Letter is written within a **historical context** (this word is on your document as well.)

The **Historical Context** is the contemporary situation and circumstances that led to the writing of the letter.

There were certain reasons why a letter was written.

No New Testament letter is ever written randomly; each letter has a point and purpose.

And usually the purpose is either explicitly stated or it is revealed by the content of what is written.

For example, in Ch. 2 he says, “**4** I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments.”

So, we know from this statements (and others we will examine later) that there were false teachers seeking to delude or persuade the saints with false teaching.

Paul is eager to warn them of such plausible arguments.

And by writing against this, Paul is constructing correct theology for the saints of Colossae (and us.)

In addition to this it is clear that Paul did not meet these saints face to face (2:1).

So, how did this church get started?

Well, apparently, this church was started by a dear and faithful brother named Epaphras (1:7.)

It seems like Epaphras was someone who might have heard the gospel from Paul and took that message back to Colossae.

It would also appear that God allowed Epaphras to become some kind of associate to Paul and he informed Paul of the things that were happening in Colossae (1:7, 9).

And providentially, at the time of writing this letter Paul was in prison (4:2, 10 and 18)

That’s the **Historical Context**.

There are a few more things to consider before we get to the greeting.

You need to understand these terms: **Grammatical Context, Exegesis and Eisegesis**.

The **Grammatical Context** deals with the words of a given sentence or the words in a given paragraph.

The reason why this is important is because **words have meaning**. And the meaning of words are found in relation to the other words in the sentences and paragraphs.

Words must be defined by what is called **Authorial Intent**. That is, what was the author's intended meaning by the words he used. (We will get to more examples of this later.)

Here's the important note:

- A word or a passage in scripture can **never** mean something to us that it never meant to the original audience.
- A word or a passage in scripture can **never** or mean something to us that contradicts other passages of scriptures.

So, if you come up with a meaning of a word or passage that no one has ever known you are in error!

If you come up with a meaning of a word or passage that contradicts other clear passages of scripture then you are in error!

What we want to do, in order to be faithful to the text, is to **exegete** it.

To **exegete** a text of scripture means that you are “reading meaning out” of the text.

In other words, you are discovering the authorial intent of a passage.

We never want to **eisegete** scripture (which is to “read meaning into” a text.)

And sadly, that is what many do.

They come to a text asking the wrong questions.

They come to a text and ask, “What does this text mean to me?”

That’s a horrible question.

The question should, “What did the text mean to the original audience?” or “What did Paul intend to communicate?”

So, hear this: Whenever you eisegete a passage of scripture you are being unfaithful to God and His word!

With the time we have left, let’s do some work on examining the greeting.

Colossians 1:1 Edited

1 Paul, (Who was Paul? He was a man radically transformed by Jesus! Read Acts 9:1–19.)

an **apostle** (apostle means, “messenger”, “sent one”, “message bearer”. An apostle is someone who has been commissioned on behalf of another to bring forth a message.)

of Christ Jesus (this detail, “of Christ Jesus” informs us of who Paul represents and has been commissioned by. Paul has been commissioned by the one who is the sovereign ruler, creator and sustainer of the universe (Colossians 1:15–20.) Jesus is the one who has all power and authority (Colossians 2:9.) He is God in the flesh (2:9!) So, when Paul speaks and writes, he is doing so with the very authority of God. Therefore, if one chooses to reject the message and teaching of Paul, they are not rejecting Paul, they are rejecting God (1 Corinthians 14:37–38; Thessalonians 4:8!))

by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2 To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father.