

Paul's Letter to the

Colossians



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Thrace

Paphlagonia

Pontus

Mysia

Bithynia

Phrygia

Galatia

Cappadocia

Asia

Pergamum

Sardes

Philadelphia

Antioch

Iconium

Smyrna

Ephesus

Hierapolis

Pisidia

Lystra

Derbe

Miletus

Meander River

Laodicea

Colossae

Attalia

Parga

Pamphilia

Selinus

TAURUS MOUNTAINS

Cilicia

Tarsus

Lycia

Syria

Rhodes

Antioch
Seleucia

Euphrates River



The City of Colossae

- Located in Phrygia (Turkey)
- On the trade highway from Ephesus to the Euphrates valley
- Close to Hierapolis and Laodicea (4:13; c.f. - Rev. 3:15-16)
 - As they prospered, Colossae declined





Mediterranean

Sea

Paul and the Colossian Church



- Who started the church?
 - Paul was in Ephesus (Acts 19), about 100 miles from Colossae
 - No mention of a visit (c.f. - 2:1)
 - Epaphras (1:7; 4:12) and/or Timothy (1:1; Acts 19:10, 22)

Paul and the Colossian Church

- Why did Paul write?
 - Spur believers on to maturity
 - Counter false teachers/teaching
 - Tone differs from Galatians
 - *'Head'em off at the pass'*



The Colossians 'Heresy'

- It is difficult to nail down exactly
 - At least 44 theories in the last 150 yrs
 - Mix of Jewish and Pagan traditions
 - Food, calendar, 'self-abasement,' angels, esoteric experiences, rules, self-made religion (2:16-23)



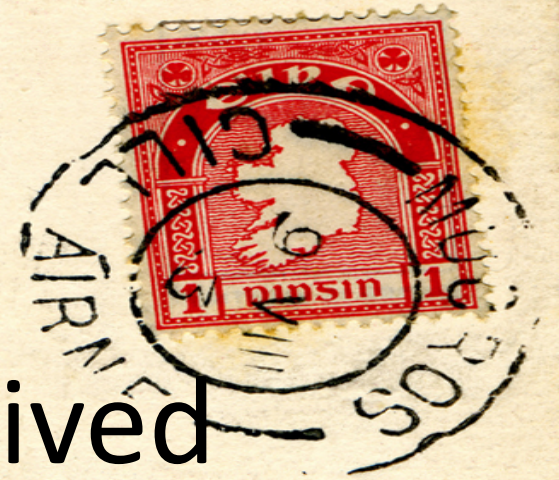
The Theme of Colossians

- Key words, ideas, phrases?
 - 'in Christ' or 'in Him'
 - Knowledge / wisdom
 - Thankfulness



The Theme of Colossians

2:6-7 Therefore as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.



Paul's Prayer for the Colossians

1. "We give thanks..." (3-8)
2. "We ask..." (9-12)



“We Give Thanks...” (3-8)

- Your Faith

- *Personal commitment to what is accepted as true*

- Romans 4 (18-25); 10:17

- *Investment* (2 Tim. 1:12)



“We Give Thanks...” (3-8)

- Your Love

- *The love of the will; willing goodness*

- John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; 1 Cor. 13:4-7

- The outworking (*proof*) of faith

- Gal. 5:6; James 2:1-17 (*works = acts of love*); cf. 1 John



“We Give Thanks...” (3-8)

- Because of the Hope
 - *Confident expectation of a promise*
 - 1 Pet. 1:3-9, 13-16; Rom. 8:18-25
 - *Laid up*: prepared and kept completely safe in heaven (see Luke 19:20)
 - Must hold to it – Col. 1:23



“We Give Thanks...” (3-8)

- The Gospel - ‘The word of truth’
 - Accurately describes the human condition and God’s remedy
 - Faith = Belief + Commitment
 - It bears fruit (cf. Rom. 1:16)
 - It must be shared (Col. 1:5-7)



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- Filled with the knowledge of His will
 - *filled up completely with a full and thorough knowledge*
 - Comes from renewing your mind with a God's truth - Rom. 12:2
 - God's will = *Holiness* (1 Pet. 1:14-16)



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- In all spiritual wisdom
 - *Spiritual vs worldly* wisdom (James 3)
 - Proverbs 8 (esp. 35-36)
- In all spiritual understanding
 - Perception; discernment
 - *Connecting the dots*



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- Transformation of worldview
 - Understand life from God’s perspective and live it out
 - Prov. 14:12; 16:25
 - OT: *Fear of the Lord* => *Life* (Prov. 14:27; 19:23; 22:4)



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- So that...
 - You will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord
 - *Walk* – conduct, actions, choices
 - *Worthy* – appropriate to His pattern



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- So that...
 - to please Him in all respects (see 3:20)
 - Pleasing to God = *Holiness*
 - 1 Cor. 7:32-34
 - John 8:29; 2 Cor. 5:9; 1 Thess. 4:1-8; Heb. 11:5-6; 13:15-16, 20-21



N. T. Wright

“Verses 9 and 10, taken together, form a miniature picture of Christian life and growth. The argument is not circular (as might at first appear), but spiral.



N. T. Wright

Paul prays that they may increase in knowledge of God's will, with the result that the Colossians will live as God wants them to and so increase in the knowledge of God! Understanding will fuel holiness; holiness will deepen understanding."



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- Walking worthy and pleasing:
 1. Bearing fruit in every good work
 2. Increasing in the knowledge of God
 3. Being strengthened with all power
 4. Giving thanks joyously



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- Walking worthy and pleasing:
 1. Bearing fruit in every good work
 - God produces the fruit as we engage in the good works (acts of love)
 - Galatians 5; 6:7-10
 - John 15:1-11



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- Walking worthy and pleasing:
 2. Increasing in the knowledge of God
- The more knowledge we use correctly, the more we are given
 - Mark 4:1-25 (*25); Heb. 5:14



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- Walking worthy and pleasing:
 3. Being strengthened with all power
 - We labor using His power (1:29)
 - Produces **steadfastness** and **patience**
 - **Circumstances** (James 1:2-4, 12)
 - **People** (Col. 3:13; Eph. 4:1-2)



“We Ask...” (9-12)

- Walking worthy and pleasing:

4. Giving thanks joyously

- God has done what we could not do

- Made us worthy to share in the inheritance by placing us in Christ

- Col. 1:13-14; Eph. 2:11-13



So What?

- How do you pray for people?
- How important is renewing your mind?
- How important is pleasing God?
- How important is thanking God?

