

PAUL'S EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS

Introduction

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Introductory Information

- Colossians is considered the “twin epistle” of Ephesians due to overlapping themes.
 - Key Differences:
 - Ephesians emphasizes God’s eternal plan of salvation through Christ (**Eph. 1-3**) and our individual responsibilities toward Him (**Eph. 4-6**).
 - Colossians answers various false doctrines and contends for the deity of Christ.
 - Both letters were written while Paul was imprisoned (**Eph. 3:1, 4:1, 6:20; Col. 1:24, 4:3, 10**) and were delivered by Tychicus (**Eph. 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-9**).
 - Scholars suggest the letters were written during Paul’s Roman imprisonment (**Acts 28**) around 62 AD.
 - Whereas Ephesians emphasizes God’s eternal plan of salvation through Christ (**Eph. 1-3**) and our individual responsibilities toward Him (**Eph. 4-6**), Colossians answers various false doctrines and contends for the deity of Christ.

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- We do not know if Paul ever visited Colossae.
 - Some suggest Epaphras first taught the gospel there. Internal evidence supports this theory (**Col. 1:7, 2:1, 4:12-13**).
 - Some suggest Paul did teach in Colossae due to its geographical proximity to areas we know he did visit (**Col. 4:13-14, 16**).
 - Whether or not Paul ever set foot in Colossae or not, he clearly had a relationship with the church and played an integral part in its foundation (**Acts 19:10**).
- Philemon and Onesimus bore a connection with the Colossian church.
 - Both men may have been members of this congregation or at least had some sort of connection with the church (**Phile. 1:1, 10, 23; Col. 4:7-9**).
 - The church in Colossae may have met in Philemon's house (**Phile. 1:2; Col. 4:9**).

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- Spiritual problems were present in Colossae.
 - Scholars suggest the city was a hub for a cult who worshipped angels, specifically Michael. Internal evidence seems to support this assumption (**Col. 2:18**).
 - Brethren were falling prey to various deceptive philosophies based on traditions of men (**Col. 2:8**).
 - Such deception through human philosophy remains an ever-present danger for Christians of all generations (**Eph. 5:6**).
 - Brethren were being led astray by Judaizing teachers (**Col. 2:11-12, 14, 16-17**).
 - The issue of Judaizing teachers was a constant problem in first century churches (**Acts 15:1-2; Gal. 1:6-8, 3:1-2, 4:9-11, 5:1-4**).
 - A Jewish-influenced primitive form of Gnosticism existed (**Col. 2:10-23; 3:5-7**).

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- The two primary themes of this epistle are:
 - The deity and preeminence of Christ (**Col. 1:15-20, 2:9-10**).
 - The hope and redemption found in Christ (**Col. 1:13-14, 27**), as contrasted with the lack of hope found in doctrines and traditions of men.
- All rebukes of error, defenses of the gospel, and exhortations to live faithfully are primarily written in view of these two themes.