

## **Christ is Sufficient**

### *Introduction to Colossians*

Text: Colossians 2:1-10

#### **I. Author and N.T. Context**

##### A. Author

1. Apostle Paul (1:1)
2. Pauline authorship not doubted until 19<sup>th</sup> century criticism
3. Place of writing: Rome
4. Date of writing: Approx. A.D. 61

##### B. N.T. Context

1. Prison Epistle
2. Written during Paul's first imprisonment (Acts 28)
3. Other Prison Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon

#### **II. The City of Colosse (1:2)**

##### A. Geographical location

1. Part of the Lycas valley triad
  - a. Gromacki's description: "The city was situated on a rocky ridge overlooking the valley of the Lycus River that runs through this mountainous district. Colosse was located about one hundred miles (160 kms) east of Ephesus and about 11 miles (18kms) east and slightly south of Laodicea.
  - b. Laodicea (West) and Heirapolis (NE of Laodicea). 3 cities almost form a triangle on the map.
  - c. Each city within about a day's journey of each other
  - d. Somewhat overshadowed by Laodicea (business) and Hierapolis (medicine)
  - e. Note: No place is too insignificant for the Gospel!
2. About 160 kms west of Ephesus
3. On the important East-West trade route.

##### B. Religious Context

- A. Greek paganism, culture and philosophy
- B. Mystery religions involving secret rites and practices. Taught that higher levels of spirituality were attainable if one submitted to certain requirements
- C. Jewish influence. Approx. 12,000 relocated from Babylon by the Roman Emperor Antiochus the Great.
- D. Colosse was a melting pot of these three elements

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### III. The Establishment of the Church

- A. The influence of Paul
  - 1. Not directly started by Paul like many of the other churches to which he wrote. (refer 2:1)
  - 2. An indirect result of Paul's Ephesian ministry (Acts 19:1-10)
- B. The influence of Epaphras
  - 1. Epaphras was a native of Colosse (4:12)
  - 2. Epaphras planted the church (1:7)
  - 3. Epaphras was burdened for the whole region (4:13)
  - 4. Note: In this example we see the Gospel flame spreading out across the region. A fire was started in Ephesus that spread across Asia and resulted in the **multiplication** of N.T., Gospel preaching, churches. May God give us more of that today!
  - 5. Romans 10:13-15 "(13) For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (14) How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believe? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? (15) And how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!"

### IV. The Threat of Heresy

- A. False doctrine – one of the chief weapons of Satan
- B. Epaphras response – traveled to Rome (approx. 1,600 kms) for Paul's council
- C. Features of the heresy
  - 1. Core Elements
    - a. Paganism
    - b. Judaism
  - 2. Key Aspects
    - a. Intellectualism (2:8)
      - i. Man-centered
      - ii. Earthly
    - b. Legalism (2:16-17)
      - i. Circumcision
      - ii. Dietary regulations
      - iii. Day observances
    - c. Elitism (2:18)
      - i. Initiatory rites (voluntary humility)
      - ii. Proud minds (superior knowledge)
    - d. Mysticism (2:18)
      - i. Angel worship
      - ii. Gnostic error

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e. Asceticism (2:20-22)

D. Central error: Adding to the all-sufficiency of Christ

### V. The Theme & Outline of the Epistle

A. Christ's Sufficiency (2:9-10)

1. The incarnate Christ possesses the fullness of the Godhead (Also 1:19)
  - a. He is the Redeemer (1:12-14)
  - b. He is the Creator (1:15-19)
  - c. He is Reconciler (1:20-23)
  - d. He is the Victor (2:11-15)
2. The redeemed believer is indwelt by the all-sufficient Christ
  - a. Sufficient for salvation (complete Gospel) (1:3-8)
  - b. Sufficient for growth and progress (1:9-14)
  - c. Sufficient for holy living (3:1-11)
  - d. Sufficient for church life (3:12-17)
  - e. Sufficient for home life (3:18-21)
  - f. Sufficient for work life (3:22 – 4:1)
  - g. Sufficient for prayer life (4:2-4)
  - h. Sufficient for social life (4:5-6)

B. Outline of the Book

1. Personal (1:1-14)
2. Doctrinal (1:15-2:23)
3. Practical (chaps. 3-4)

### Conclusion:

1. Have you experience the saving power of Christ?
2. Are you involved in God's program of winning the lost for Christ?
3. What is your faith resting in for your Christian life? Christ and His sufficiency or man-centered philosophy?