

Bible Study 101:
13. Outline of Colossians

Chapter 1

1–2: Greetings and Blessing

Colosse is located less than 75 miles from Ephesus, so must have been reached by during Paul's two years teaching in Ephesus during his second missionary journey, where Acts 19:10 says that, "all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks."

3–8: Paul's thankfulness on hearing of the believers in Colosse

The Bible gives no record of Paul actually ministering in Colosse. Here he indicates he has heard of their faith second hand.

Evidently Epaphras had somewhat to do with raising up a church in Colosse (though I believe it is going too far to say this with certainty, as some commentators do, just based on this text).

Can it not suffice to say that Epaphras was involved, and that he is the one who reported to Paul of their faith?

9–11: Beginning of a lengthy digression on God and salvation

Prayer that they be filled with the knowledge of God's will, which will enable them to walk worthy of the Lord, in His strength.

12–13: Thanks due to God who has made us suitable to be part of the kingdom of light (*versus* kingdom of darkness) in Christ

14–19: Doctrine of Christ in a nutshell

Redemption in His blood, forgiveness of sins

Image (visible form) of invisible God

"Firstborn of creation" indicates His existence before all creation, not that He Himself was created (notice, "for by Him...")

"By Him were all things created," agrees with John 1

"...and for Him," Greek "into Him," means "for His purposes," cf II Timothy 2:26 (of devil) "to do his will," not "at his will"

He is before all things; by Him all things consist (are sustained)

He is head of His Body, the church

Firstborn from the dead, cf Romans 8:29

He is pre-eminent (first) in all things; in Him all fulness dwells

20–23: Doctrine of Christ as applied to Colossians specifically

24–25: Paul's ministry: sees his own suffering for sake of the Body of Christ as only right, considering all that Christ suffered

26–29: Paul's message to the Gentiles: Christ in you, hope of glory

Chapter 2

1–7: Paul's agony of spirit for the saints of Colosse and Laodicea

"Conflict" means agony, in the sense of great burden of concern

That their hearts be knit together in love

That they have understanding of God's mystery

That they walk according to the truths they have received

Enticing words explained beginning in verse 8

8–9: Warning against philosophies of men based on worldly logic

Particularly concerning deity of Christ, and His headship

10–12: Meaning of being "in" Christ

Complete; circumcised from body of sins; buried; risen

13–15: Forgiven because law nailed to the cross, taken out of way

Principalities and powers spoiled; Christ triumphed over them

16–23: If law nailed to cross, then cannot be brought back under it

Foods, drink, special days, even sabbath, not law for us, because they merely foreshadowed Christ, and we have Christ!

Do not be sucked into mystical religions involving angels (literally prophetic of Gabriel or Moroni of Mormon religion)

Verse 19, Christ and body, cf Ephesians 4

Dead with Christ means dead to rudiments, that is, principles, on which world must operate, laws concerning that which passes away, all for outward show of righteousness, honor of men

Chapter 3

1–4: The "risen with Christ" life; seeking things above; affection on things above; dead to earthly allurements

Verse 4, cf I John 3:2

5–9: Old conduct rejected as a result of being dead with Christ

10–17: General positive effects in character and conduct as a result of putting on the new man

18–21: Effects in the home as a result of putting on the new man

22–25: Effects in world at large as result of putting on new man

Chapter 4

1: Bad break from chapter 3: applying same principle to masters as was in end of chapter 2 to servants (employers and employees)

2–4: Importance of prayer, watching; asking for prayer of saints

5–6: Admonition concerning speech, especially toward outsiders

7–18: Concluding practical instructions, greetings, benediction

Note: Marcus (likely John Mark), "sister's son to Barnabas," gives reason why Barnabas favored him; means that very likely the Upper Room of the last supper was owned by Barnabas' own sister or their parents; perhaps was also his home.

Indication of closeness of Colosse and Laodicea churches