

# COLOSSIANS AND PHILEMON

## Introduction

## Lesson 1

### I. Review Paul's Life (See attachment)

- A. His work in Asia - A.D. 54-57 - (Acts 19:8-10)
- B. Return to Jerusalem, arrest and 2 year imprisonment in Caesarea.
- C. 2 year imprisonment in Rome (61-63) Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Philemon written.

### II. The Four Letters

- A. Philippians
  1. Occasioned by a gift sent to him (Phil. 4:10-20)
  2. Very personal, no real rebuke, no apparent doctrinal crisis discussed.
- B. Philemon
  1. Occasioned by conversion of Philemon's runaway slave whom Paul was sending back to his master with a letter.
  2. It is a personal letter to a friend.
- C. Colossians
  1. Occasioned by a report apparently brought to Paul by Epaphras that serious doctrinal errors were being spread in Colossae. These undermined the divinity and sufficiency of Christ.
  2. The theme: **"In Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; and you are complete in Him"** (Col. 2:9-10). These words should be memorized.
- D. Ephesians
  1. Many feel this was written soon after Colossians. It is less combative, but emphasizes the truth which might well serve to insulate the Ephesians from the errors found in Colossae.
  2. The theme of Ephesians: **"The church which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all"** (Eph. 1:22-23).

### III. Some Facts about Colossae

- A. Colosse [kuh-LAH-see] An ancient city of Phrygia, located on the Lycus River about 11 miles (18 km) SE of Laodicea. By NT times the city was in decline, eclipsed by the neighboring cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis.
- B. Many Jews lived there, some of whom had been influenced by Greek philosophy which they tried to harmonize with the law. They seem to have infiltrated the church bringing in their heresies.

### IV. Errors in Colossae

- A. Began with the same Hellenistic errors that formed the basis for the Gnostic heresies which developed fully in the next century. Similar errors are dealt with in I, II and III John.
  1. The intrinsic evil of matter.
  2. The absolute separation between the godhead and the created world.
- B. Threat to Christianity
  1. Made it impossible for good God to dwell in evil flesh.
  2. Required numerous intermediaries between God and man.
  3. Meant impossible to live a pure life in a fleshly body.
  4. Purest life was to be attained by severity to the body.  
*Note: Roman Catholicism retains elements of this same error borrowed from the Greeks.*
- C. Errors were being advanced by:
  1. Persuasive words (argumentation)
  2. Philosophy
  3. Traditions of men
  4. Basic Principles of the world (science?)
  5. Religious appeals (appeals to the Law)
  6. Worship pleasing to men
  7. Appeals to things seen, the fleshly mind.
  8. Appearance of wisdom.
- D. Apparently being urged as not invalidating Christianity, but serving as a *step beyond*.