

THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE

Introduction

- 1) The church at Colossae received an epistle from Paul, who was an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God (Col. 1:1)
- 2) It was one of several local churches of Christ in the first century that we can learn from today, and one of three churches in a close tri-city area

I) HISTORY OF THE CITY AND CHURCH

A) *The city of Colossae*

- 1) Located 120 miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus River Valley
- 2) In Phrygia, which was part of Asia Minor
- 3) Part of a triad of cities with Laodicea and Hierapolis at the foot of Mount Cadmus
- 4) Little to no archaeological excavations have occurred at the ancient tel of Colosse

B) *The church at Colossae*

- 1) Paul had not visited there (2:1); written from prison in Rome, AD 60-62 (4:3, 10, 18)
- 2) Likely established as a result of the spread of the gospel from Ephesus (Acts 19:10)
- 3) Epaphras, who was from there, was instrumental in evangelizing that area (1:7-8; 4:12-13)
- 4) Members included Philemon and his former slave Onesimus (4:9; Philemon 10-12)

II) CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH

- A) Had faith in Christ and love for all the saints because of the hope laid up for them (1:3-8)
 - 1) They had heard of this hope in the “word of the truth of the gospel” (v. 5)
 - 2) The word they heard had come to them by preaching (vv. 6, 23; Rom. 10:14; 1 Cor. 1:21)
 - 3) Their knowledge and faithfulness needed to be ongoing and increasing (1:9-11)
- B) Those in the body of Christ have been transferred into the kingdom of Jesus (1:13)
 - 1) Only in the kingdom of Christ do we have the blessing of divine forgiveness of sins (v. 14)

III) TREASURES OF DIVINE KNOWLEDGE VS. EMPTY HUMAN PHILOSOPHIES

A) *The Knowledge of Christ*

- 1) Preeminence of Christ as head of the church and firstborn from the dead (1:15-23)
- 2) Must become “perfect in Christ Jesus” (1:27-29)
- 3) Taught the treasures of wisdom and knowledge of Christ – must walk in Him (2:2-7)

B) *The Philosophies of men*

- 1) Cheated, taken captive by empty deceit of human philosophies/wisdom (2:8)
- 2) False teachings (“Colossian heresy”) – denial of Christ’s preeminence and deity, ascetic practices, worship of angels, human philosophies, Jewish practices (2:18-23)

IV) WHAT MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH AT COLOSSAE NEEDED TO REMEMBER

- A) Their spiritual circumcision by burial in baptism – was dead, now alive (2:12-13)
- B) In his death, Jesus triumphed over sin’s dominion over them (2:14-17)
- C) If raised with Christ, seek those things above – heavenly, spiritual (3:1-4)
- D) Continually put sin out of our lives and put on the new man (3:5-17)
- E) The gospel will do us no good if we do not make personal application (3:16-4:1)
- F) Walk in wisdom toward those who are non-Christians (4:5-6)
- G) Be interested in the work of the Lord everywhere (4:7-9)
- H) Share the truth with other brethren; encourage the work of godly men (4:15-17)
- I) Sympathize and pray for those who work and suffer in the kingdom (4:18)

Conclusion

The **church at Colosse** had to distinguish right vs. wrong and keep their faith in Jesus, applying it to their daily lives. Each member of each church of Christ must do the same to strengthen the body as a whole. Let us be rooted and built up in Christ, established in the faith!