

The Iron Men of Fellowship of Champions

Colossians 1:1 (Introduction)

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Opening Prayer

COLOSSIANS: BACKGROUND & INTRODUCTION

- **“Paul”**: Who is Paul? Discuss.
 - Paul was formerly known as Saul.
 - He was a Pharisee and persecutor of the church until his conversion on the road to Damascus where he intended to do further harm to the Christian sect of Jews there. (#Acts 9:1-31, Php 3:4-14)
 - The Apostle to the Gentiles (#Ro 11:13)
- **“Timothy”**: Who is Timothy? Discuss.
 - Timothy’s father was a Greek, and his mother and grandmother, Eunice and Lois, were largely responsible for his knowledge of the Scriptures early in life. (#Acts 16:1, 2Ti 1:5, 3:14-15)
 - He was converted under Paul’s ministry and became a trusted travel companion, co-laborer, and confidant. (#1Ti 1:2)
 - Timothy was eventually appointed to head the church that Paul founded at Ephesus. Timothy was the recipient of two of Paul’s epistles, I and II Timothy.
- **Ancient City of Colossae**:
 - “Colossae” - The plural feminine form of the word "colossal" (Gr. monstrosities).
 - The city may have picked up its name from a statue of the Greek sun-god Helios. The statue was built in the 3rd century B.C, and was known as the "Colossus of Rhodes."
 - One of the Seven Wonders of the ancient world, approximately 10 stories tall (similar in size to the Statue of Liberty).
 - It was built by the Rhodesians after a successfully fending off Macedonian King, Demetrius I, and his year-long siege of Rhodes.
 - An inland city located in Asia Minor (modern day Turkey), near Laodicea (12 mi. southeast), in the region of the seven churches of Revelation 2-4.
 - Because of their proximity, some scholars draw a correlation between Colossians and the letter to the church at Laodicea. (#Rev 3:1-4:22)
 - 100 miles east of Ephesus along the high road to the great Euphrates river, and near the Meander River (where we get the word, “meander”).
 - As is the case of Ephesus (earthquake 614 AD), Colossae now lay in ruin.

- Colossae was the least of all the churches to whom Paul wrote epistles.
- **The Church at Colossae:**
 - It is assumed that Paul never visited the church at Colossae.
 - It was likely founded by Epaphras who probably came to faith in Christ during Paul's three year ministry in Ephesus.
 - Col 1:7 *"just as you learned [the gospel] from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf"*
 - Col 4:12 *"Epaphras, who is one of your [own,] a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, sends you his greetings, always striving earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God."*
#Phm 1:22-23, Col 1:7, 4:12, Acts 19:10, 20:31
- **Writing of the Epistle to the Colossians:**
 - Paul is the author and was a prisoner in Rome at the time of his writing of the epistle, about 60-62 AD, 30 years after the Resurrection of Christ.
 - Paul was visited in prison in Rome by Epaphras who reported that heresies (Gnosticism) were being introduced into the Colossian church.
 - Paul was prompted to write the epistle, which was delivered by Tychicus and Onesimus (escaped slave of Philemon #Pm 1:10-12).
 - Apparently, the letters to the Philippians, the Ephesians and Philemon were also written at about the same time, the latter two being delivered to the region along with the Colossian letter.
#Col 4:7-9, Eph 6:21, Pm 1:10-12
- **Colossians and Ephesians:**
 - Taking a holistic view of the NT canon of books, Colossians seems to serve as a companion to the books of Ephesians and Hebrews in that all three speak of Christ's superior authority and position:
 - Hebrews – the superiority over all Judaism (our High Priest).
 - Ephesians – headship over the church (our bridegroom).
 - Colossians – preeminence in all things (our Creator).

- Colossians and Ephesians are considered by some scholars to be complimentary, as Ephesians focuses on the church as the body of Christ, and Colossians focuses on Christ as the head of the church.
- It has been said that 3/5ths of Colossians is reflected in Ephesians.
- The heresy introduced at Colossae was *Gnosticism*. Paul had warned the churches of the region previously regarding the introduction of heresy. In fact, Christ's letter to Ephesus makes mention of the fact that the Ephesian church had been diligent to rid itself of heresy.
 - **Warning of Paul** – Ac 20:17-32 *“¹⁷ From Miletus [Paul] sent word to Ephesus and called to himself the elders of the church. ¹⁸ ... he said to them, “You yourselves know, from the first day that I set foot in Asia, how I was with you the whole time, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility and with tears and trials which came upon me through plots of the Jews; ²⁰ how I did not shrink from declaring to you anything that was beneficial, and teaching you publicly and from house to house, ²¹ solemnly testifying to solemnly testifying to both Jews and Greeks of repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ... ²⁶ Therefore, I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all people. ²⁷ For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God. ²⁸ Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; ³⁰ and from among your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things to draw away the disciples after them. ³¹ Therefore, be on the alert, remembering that night and day for a period of three years I did not cease to admonish each one with tears. ³² And now I entrust you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified.*
 - **Response of Ephesus** – Re 2:2-3 *“2 ‘I know your deeds and your labor and perseverance, and that you cannot tolerate evil people, and you have put those who call themselves apostles to the test, and they are not, and you found them to be false; 3 and you have perseverance and have endured on account of My name, and have not become weary.”*
#Acts 20:17-32, Rev 2:2-3

EXPOSITION OF THE TEXT

Verse 1

- “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God” - Paul gives his authority for the text. He is an apostle sent forth by God, commissioned and empowered to speak on His behalf. It should be noted that Paul’s letters are Scripture, literally God breathed. This fact is also attested to by Peter. Paul’s apostleship is quite important in this epistle as the Gnostics must be reminded of the superiority of His teaching over that of the heretics.
 - 2Pe 3:15-16 and regard the patience of our Lord [as] salvation; just as also our beloved brother Paul, according to the wisdom given him, wrote to you, 16 as also in all [his] letters, speaking in them of these things, in which there are some things that are hard to understand, which the untaught and unstable distort, as [they do] also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.
 - 2Ti 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for correction, for training in righteousness;
#2Pe 3:15-16, 2Ti 3:16

Application Discussion

Closing Prayer

Small Groups

- Discuss current Scripture reading assignment.
- Prayer:
 - Anything praiseworthy.
 - Areas of accountability.
 - Other prayer requests.