

Lessons in Colossians: Part 1

**Protecting the Body of
Christ**

Authority

- Dictated by Paul (though disputed) written by Timothy
 - Col. 1:1
- Written around 62 AD
 - Likely as an result of Epaphras report of the church



Main Themes

- Christ is Lord over all creation
 - Heaven
 - Earth
 - Earth Below
- Christ has secured redemption for his people
 - Which enables people to participate with Him in his death, resurrection, and fullness

Themes

- **Jesus Christ is preeminent over all creation, Lord over all human rules and cosmic powers (1:15-20; 2:9-10; 3:1)**
- **God has worked through Christ to secure redemption and reconciliation for all who put their faith in him (1:13-14; 20-22)**
- **Believers are in Christ and thus participate in a relationship of solidarity with Christ in his death on the cross, his resurrection from the dead, his new life, and his fullness (2:9-14; 3:1-4)**

Themes

- Christ has defeated the powers of darkness on the cross, and Christians share in his power and authority over that realm (2:8; 2:10; 2:15; 2:20)
- Jesus is the fulfillment of Jewish expectation, and Christians now share in the heritage of the old covenant people of God through their union with Him (1:12; 1:21-22; 1:27)
- Believers are called to grow in maturity in Christ by getting rid of sinful practices and cultivating Christian virtues (1:10-12; 1:28; 3:1-4:6)

A Church Like Most Churches

- Started by hearing the good news
 - Epaphras likely heard Paul in Ephesus (100 miles directly east of Colossae)
- The new believer shared the good news
 - Epaphras travels home to share with friends and family
- New believers gather together for fellowship
 - Where they grow in Christian maturity

Colossae Has Problems

- There is an extensional threat of the church (4:12)
 - What is that threat?
 - Gnosticism
 - The world was made by an inferior God
 - Christ is an envoy of that God
 - It demanded asceticism (abstention from all forms of indulgence)

Colossae Has Problems

- There is an extensional threat of the church (4:12)
 - What is that threat?
 - Judaism
 - There is only one part to God
 - People must follow Old Testament law
 - Christianity is a false teaching from true religious enlightenment

Colossae Has Problems

- There is an extensional threat of the church (4:12)
 - What is that threat?
 - Christian Mysticism
 - Protection of evil can be found in angels
 - Making them worthy of worship (2:18)
 - Carrying relics for protection
 - Teaching that devalues Christ

The Situation Is Not Unique

- **Warrensburg Church of Christ**
 - **A product of the Restoration Movement (Stone-Campbell Movement)**
 - **To reform the church into a single body patterned after the church of the New Testament**
 - **Common Beliefs: Jesus is the son of God, baptism through immersion, Lord's Supper on the first day of the week**

The Situation Is Not Unique

- **Warrensburg Church of Christ**
 - Started by man who had heard the word (Virgil Atwell)
 - Came to Warrensburg because of his circumstances (Job transferred)
 - Met together with fellow believers (McWhirters)
 - Found a common place to meet together (1945)

The History of Our Problems Are Not Unique

- Disagreement in like-mindedness
 - Mutual Edification (Non-paid minister)
 - Support of non-institutional support (such as the supporting of UCM)
 - Co-operative action (Sponsoring church)
- Disagreement over leadership
 - Appointment of elders
- Disagreements over finances

Christians Are Still Fighting Colossae's Problems

- Gnosticism runs rampant in the church today
 - Limitations are put on God (He can be put a box)
 - We attempt to bend scripture to our will/desire
- OT is still sold as necessary for Christian salvation
 - As attested by members here
- Christian Mysticism is still strong
 - We believe angels can protect us (guardian angels)
 - We still carry relics or icons like they have power

Christians Are Fighting New Problems

- **Post-modernism**
 - All beliefs have merit and are beneficial to the person believing them
- **Intolerance**
 - Often done in the name of tolerance
- **Silent Acceptance**
 - Ok to believe as long as you keep it to yourself

Don't Be Fooled

- It will be tempting to look for human solutions to our problems
 - Living only by example
 - Social media activism
 - Passing off evangelism (Inviting a friend to church, but not personally talking to them about God)
 - Making God fit the current world view

The Solution Is Colossae's Solution: In Him

- In whom we have redemption
- In him all things were created
- In him all the full of god
- Who reconciled in his body of flesh
- In whom all hidden treasure of wisdom and knowledge
- Walk in him
- Built up in him
- Filled in him
- Circumcised in him
- In him raised up
- Triumphant over them in him
- Pleasing in him

Final Thoughts

- It is unlikely that our problems will ever be unique to us
 - That however still gives us no excuse
- The church will continue to deal with them long after we're gone
 - Which is why it is important to see how they have been managed
- Avoid modern day solutions
 - Look to those that have stood the test of time, culture, and humanity