



*Colossians 3–4,
1 Thessalonians 1–3*

B R C
Study the Bible
and follow Jesus

NT #40 Bible Reading Class
Pastor: Wentang Wang

Cerritos, CA

A Bible Reader's Conviction

- *All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and **training in righteousness**, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work. (2 Tim. 3:16-17, NIV)*

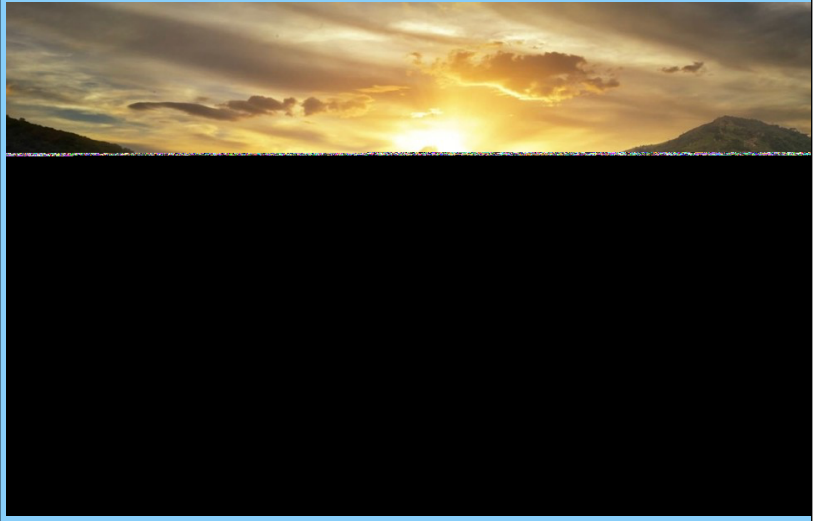
A Blessed Journey

1. May you study God's Word with a reverent heart and walk in His will.

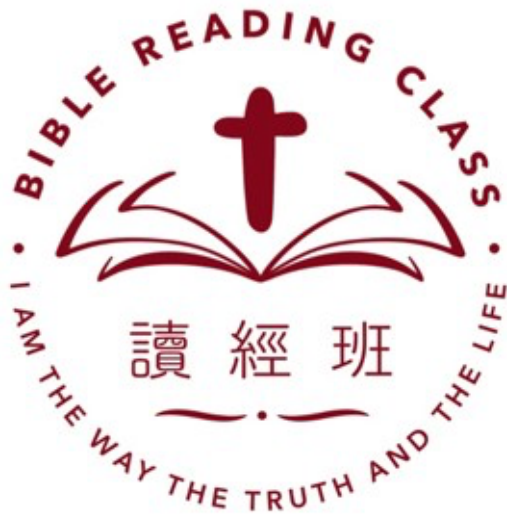
2. May the Lord's Word flourish, and may He add to the church those who are being saved.

3. May the Lord bless your days of reading the Scriptures.

Study the Bible, follow Jesus

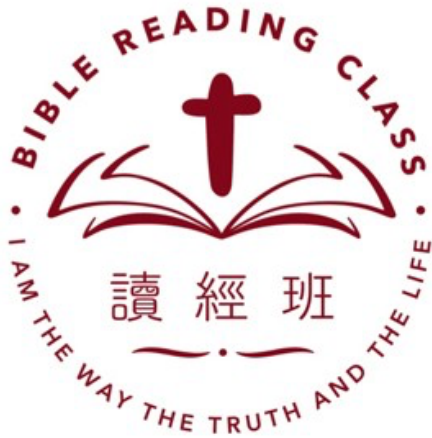


The Guiding Principles of BRC



- Christ-Centered
- Bible-Based
- Mission-Minded

BRC: A Gentleman's Agreement



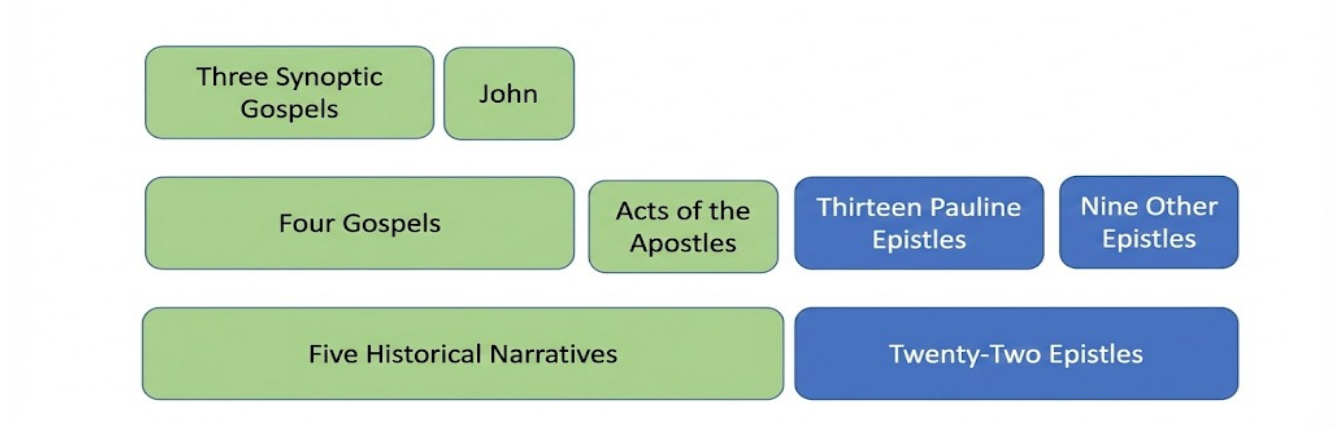
I'll complete weekly reading assignment

I'll watch weekly teaching video in its entirety

I'll complete weekly quiz (closed book)

The Structure of the 27 Books of the New Testament

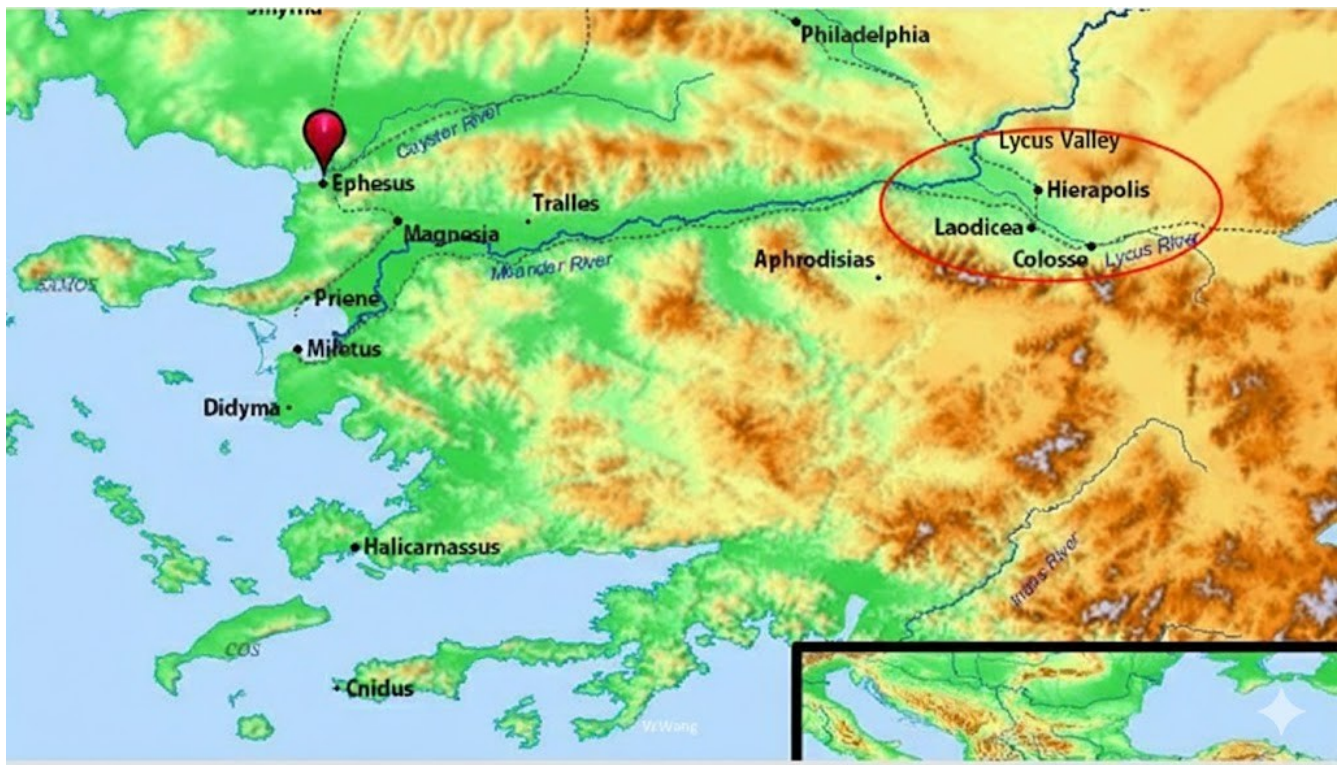
- The Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke) John
- The Fourfold Gospel, Acts, The Thirteen Pauline Epistles, The Other Nine Epistles (General Epistles and Others)
- Five Books of Historical Narrative, Twenty-Two Books of Doctrinal Teaching



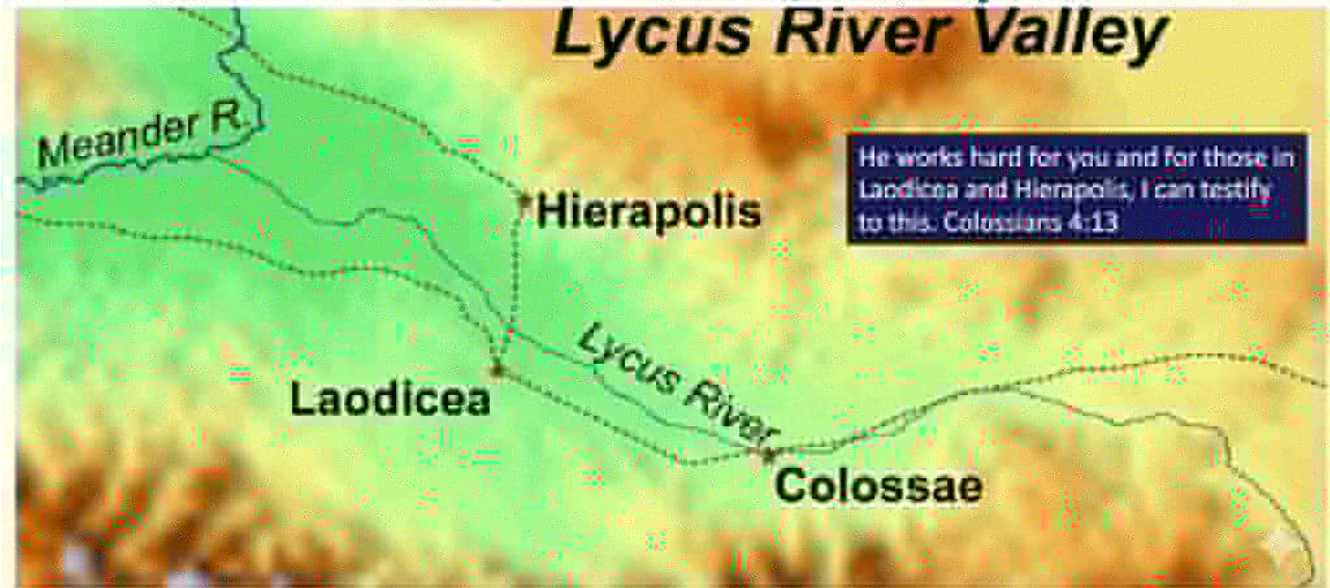


W.Wang

7



Three Cities of the Lycus River Valley: Colossae, Laodicea, Hierapolis



Colossae

● Among the cities mentioned in Paul's epistles, Rome, Corinth, and Ephesus were major first-tier cities—centers of land and sea transportation, politics, commerce, culture, and religion, gathering wealth and influence in one place. Philippi and Thessalonica were important regional cities, distinctive second-tier cities. Only Colossae was a small town, incomparable to the cities above, and even far inferior to its nearby neighbor Laodicea. Yet this insignificant little town became famous because of one letter from Paul; even two thousand years later, people still study its history and visit its ancient ruins.

● Colossae (**Colossimus**, originally referring to a high-quality purple dye) was located in the **Lycus** River Valley of the Roman province of Asia. The waters of the Lycus River contained abundant minerals, producing cloth and wool with a glossy, splendid color that was highly prized. The inhabitants of the Lycus Valley consisted mainly of three groups:

1. **Phrygians**, the local people, deeply influenced by Greek culture.
2. **Jews**, who were relocated here by Antiochus the Great around 200 BC; by the apostolic era, the Jewish population in Colossae had become quite significant.
3. **Foreigners** who had moved here for work and commerce.

Laodicea and Hierapolis

- When **Laodicea** is mentioned, Christians are usually familiar with it. It is the church rebuked by the Lord: **“So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.” (Revelation 3:16, NIV)**. Laodicea was famous for its banking industry, densely populated, and extremely wealthy—much larger and more prosperous than Colossae. Because the believers there lived in abundance, they assumed they lacked nothing, yet failed to see their true spiritual condition: **“You say, ‘I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing.’ But you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked.” (Revelation 3:17, NIV)**
- **Hierapolis** was a resort city at the foot of the mountains, famous for its hot springs. The hot springs were rich in minerals and were believed to have healing properties. The city was filled with inns and bathhouses, attracting many people who came to soak in the hot springs and enjoy entertainment.
- Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis stood together like three pillars in the Lycus Valley, close to one another, and it was not difficult to visit all three cities in a single day. Paul mentions Laodicea and Hierapolis in the book of Colossians and instructs the Colossians to read the letter that came from Laodicea.

The Letter from Laodicea

● *“After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.” (Colossians 4:16, NIV)*

● This verse mentions a **“letter from Laodicea,”** yet there is no **“Epistle to the Laodiceans”** in the New Testament. What happened? There are three possibilities:

1. **The letter has been lost.**

Not all of Paul’s letters were preserved in the New Testament. For example, Paul wrote four letters to the Corinthians, but only two have been preserved.

2. **The “Letter from Laodicea” is actually the Epistle to the Ephesians.**

Ephesians and Colossians are very similar in content, though Ephesians is richer and more expansive—essentially the “deluxe edition” of Colossians. Since Ephesus, Laodicea, and Colossae were all located in the province of Asia, it is possible that the letter to the Ephesians circulated among the nearby churches, reaching Laodicea first and then being passed on to Colossae.

3. **A so-called “Epistle to the Laodiceans” once appeared in church history,** containing only 20 verses, written in Latin, with most of its content copied from Philippians. It has been identified as a forgery.

The Seven Churches of Revelation

• In clockwise order:

1. Ephesus
2. Smyrna
3. Pergamum
4. Thyatira
5. Sardis
6. Philadelphia
7. Laodicea



The Fruit of the Gospel in Asia

● *The Roman province of Asia was located on the western end of Asia Minor, facing the Aegean Sea. Ephesus was the largest and most important city, and Colossae and Laodicea also belonged to this province. Paul used Ephesus as his center of ministry and preached in Asia for three years (Acts 20:31). His labor produced abundant gospel fruit: “so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord.” (Acts 19:10, NIV)*



Epaphras, Onesimus, and Tychicus

- The book of Colossians mentions three individuals: **Epaphras, Onesimus, and Tychicus**. They were the fruit of Paul’s gospel ministry and his beloved coworkers. Besides the book of Colossians, Paul also refers to them in other epistles.

Epaphras:

- Epaphras was a native of Colossae. When Paul preached the gospel in Ephesus, Epaphras believed in the Lord, then returned to Colossae to bring the gospel to his hometown and establish the church there. Paul explains this at the beginning of the letter: “**...just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant...**”— *Colossians 1:6–7, NIV*

- When the Colossian church was infiltrated by false teachings, Epaphras became deeply concerned. At that time Paul was under house arrest in Rome, and Epaphras traveled a great distance to find Paul and report the situation in Colossae, which led Paul to write the Epistle to the Colossians. At the end of the letter, Paul mentions Epaphras again: “**Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis.**” (*Colossians 4:12–13, NIV*)

Paul also mentions Epaphras in the book of Philemon (*Philemon 23*).

Epaphras, Onesimus, and Tychicus

Onesimus:

- *Onesimus was also a Colossian, and his life contains a timeless story of forgiveness and reconciliation. Originally, Onesimus was a slave belonging to Philemon, but he later ran away. Paul refers to Onesimus as “**my son, who became my son while I was in chains**” (Philemon 10, NIV). While Paul was imprisoned, Onesimus encountered him, and Paul led him to faith in Christ. Since Paul knew Philemon personally, he believed that Onesimus should return to Colossae to seek Philemon’s forgiveness and resolve the conflict between them completely. Therefore, Paul wrote a letter of appeal on Onesimus’s behalf and instructed him to carry the letter back to Colossae and deliver it to Philemon in person.*

Tychicus:

- *Tychicus was also a man from Asia. At the end of Paul’s third missionary journey, when he traveled from Greece back to Asia, Tychicus was among his companions: “**He was accompanied by... Tychicus and Trophimus from the province of Asia.**” (Acts 20:4, NIV). Tychicus was an important coworker of Paul and the official letter-carrier for the Epistle to the Colossians. He appears in the book of Acts and in several of Paul’s letters.*

Colossians

1. Author: Paul

2. Date of Writing: Written during Paul's first imprisonment in Rome, around AD 60.

3. Place of Writing: Rome, in a rented house under house arrest.

4. Purpose of Writing:

A. Doctrinal:

Paul learned from Epaphras that the church in Colossae was being disturbed by false teachings. He wrote this letter to correct errors concerning the person of Christ.

B. Practical:

To encourage them to live out Christ in their interpersonal relationships.

C. Personal:

To have **Onesimus** (Colossians 4:9) accompany **Tychicus** in delivering the letter back to Colossae, so that Onesimus could seek forgiveness from his master Philemon.

Colossians

5. Characteristics of the Book:

A. It is the richest epistle concerning the nature and person of Christ.

B. Colossians 1:15–23, Ephesians 1:17–23, and Philippians 2:6–11 are the three strongest Christological passages in Paul’s letters.

C. The background of Onesimus (not Nicodemus) connects closely with the book of Philemon.

Colossians

6. Theme of the Book: *The Supremacy of Christ*

7. Outline of the Book:

I. *Christ's supremacy over all things (Chapters 1–2)*

II. *Christ's supremacy in our daily living (Chapters 3–4)*

8. Key Words: *Fullness, Wisdom, Mystery*

Structure of Colossians

- *Greeting, 1:1–14*
 - *Main Body, 1:15–4:6*
 - *Christ's Supremacy, 1:15–22*
 - *The Servant of Christ, 1:23–2:7*
 - *Those Who Depart from Christ, 2:8–23*
 - *Christian Living, 3:1–4:6*
 - *Final Greetings, 4:7–18*
-

Contents of Colossians

Greeting, 1:1–14

- *Salutation, 1:1–2*
 - *Thanksgiving, 1:3–8*
 - *Prayer, 1:9–14*
-

Contents of Colossians

The Supremacy of Christ, 1:15–22

- *The Nature of Christ, 1:15*
 - *Christ and Creation, 1:16–17*
 - *Christ and the Church, 1:18–19*
 - *Christ and Salvation, 1:20–23*
-

Contents of Colossians

The Servant of Christ, 1:23–2:7

- *The Cost of the Servant, 1:24*
 - *The Message of the Servant, 1:25–27*
 - *The Task of the Servant, 1:28–29*
 - *The Encouragement of the Servant, 2:1–7*
-

Contents of Colossians

Those Who Depart from Christ, 2:8–23

- *The Nature of False Teaching, 2:8–15*
 - *Examples of False Teaching, 2:15–17*
 - *Attitudes of False Teachers, 2:18–19*
 - *The Uselessness of False Teaching, 2:20–23*
-

Contents of Colossians

Christian Living, 3:1–4:6

- *Personal Life, 3:1–11*
- *Church Life, 3:12–17*
- *Family Life, 3:18–21*
- *Work Life, 3:22–4:1*
- *Prayer Life, 4:2–4*
- *Social Life, 4:5–6*

Final Greetings, 4:7–18

Faith, Hope, and Love in the Gospel

● *“We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God’s people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel.” (Colossians 1:3–5, NIV)*

1. Faith in Christ Jesus

*The purpose of Colossians is to address false teachings. The root of false teaching is **departing from Christ**.*

*False teachers do not openly deny Christ, but in practice they **empty Christ of His centrality**.*

The name “Christian faith” remains, the rituals remain, the activities remain—but Jesus is no longer the focus.

They pursue rituals, mystical knowledge, special experiences, fasting, asceticism, prosperity, health, and wealth—while Jesus fades into the background.

This is exactly the kind of false teaching Paul confronts in Colossians.

*Paul defines the sphere of true faith as **“in Christ.”***

*Only what is **in Christ** is faith; anything outside of Christ is not faith.*

Faith, Hope, and Love in the Gospel

2. Love for All the Saints

Faith expresses itself through love. Paul says: **“The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.”** (Galatians 5:6, NIV)

The primary recipients of love are fellow believers, then others: **“Mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love.”** (2 Peter 1:7, NIV)

No matter how pure one’s doctrine is or how lofty one’s teaching is, if a person is cold, lacking compassion and empathy, then his faith—unable to produce love—is false and empty.

3. The Hope Stored Up in Heaven

The gospel makes us God’s children and heirs, giving us a heavenly hope. We believe the gospel and trust the Father’s promises in Christ.

As followers of Jesus, we live on earth but set our eyes on heaven; we seek heavenly things, not earthly things: **“Set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things.”** (Colossians 3:1–2, NIV)

The Christ Hymn (1:15–20)

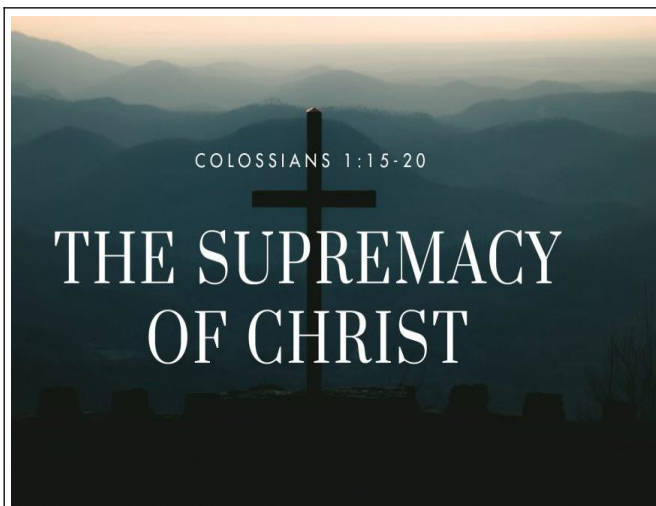
- *Colossians 1:15–20 holds the same place in **Christology** as Romans 3:19–26 does in **Soteriology**—it is unparalleled.*

*This passage lifts us to spiritual heights, revealing the identity and supremacy of the **Cosmic Christ**.*

Jesus Christ, the beloved Son of God, is not only the head of the church but the Lord of all creation.

Everything on earth and in heaven is reconciled to God through Him.

- *“The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.” (Colossians 1:15–20, NIV)*
-



Christ Preeminent

• ***The Christ Hymn (1:15–20)***

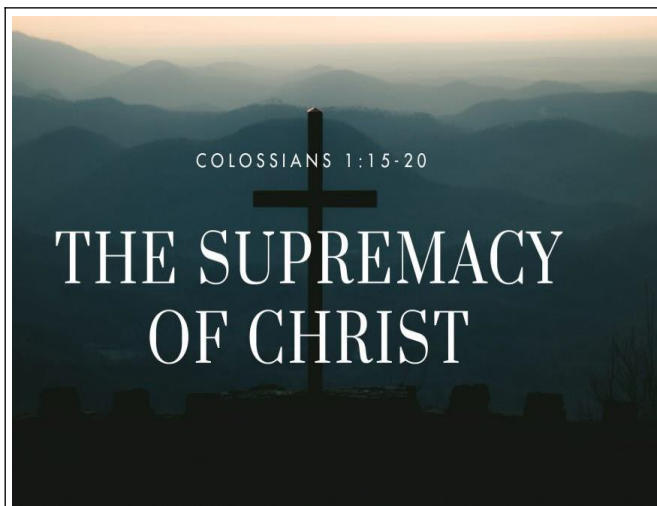
• *The Christ Hymn in Colossians is of immeasurable importance, whether for teaching truth or refuting false doctrines.*

Throughout history, every heresy has ultimately arisen from a wrong understanding of who Jesus Christ is.

Who is Jesus? Is He God or man? Is He the Creator or a created being? Is He the supreme true God, or a lesser deity? If Jesus is God, then do we believe in one God, two gods, three gods, or the Triune God?

Once these questions are answered incorrectly, heresy inevitably follows.

• *The Christ Hymn explains with precision that Jesus Christ is the beloved Son of God, the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation, existing before all created things. All things were created through Him and for Him, and in Him all things hold together.*



Christ Preeminent

1. Christ Has the Supremacy Over All Things

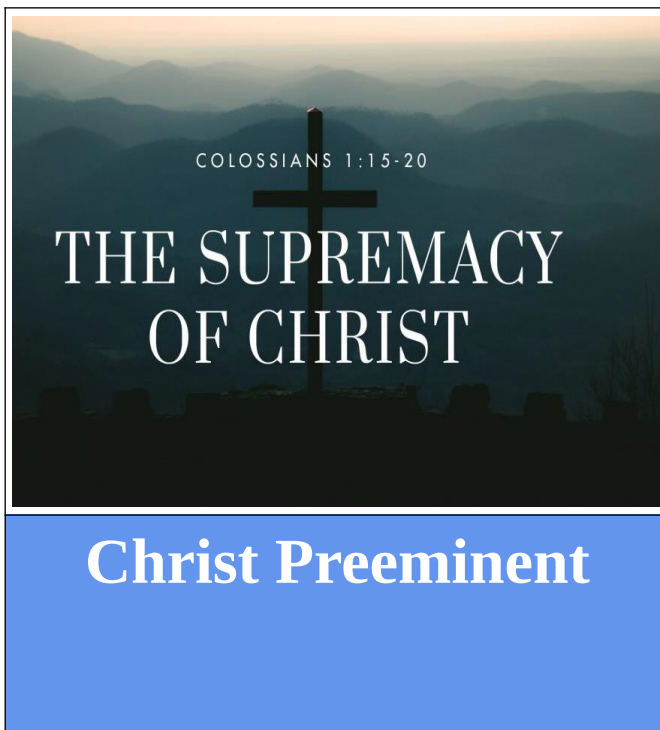
- *“He is the firstborn, before all creation.”*

This statement affirms Christ’s position in all things as an incomparable first place.

Christ being the “firstborn” expresses His honored and exalted status, not a sequence of birth.

• *When Jesus became flesh, it was God Himself coming into the world as a man. His entire life demonstrated what humanity was meant to be according to God’s will. God desires His other children to **“be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.”** (Romans 8:29, NIV)*

*Christ is the “firstborn,” becoming the first such “man,” because **“when God brings his firstborn into the world... it was fitting that God... should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered.”** (Hebrews 1:6; 2:10, NIV)*



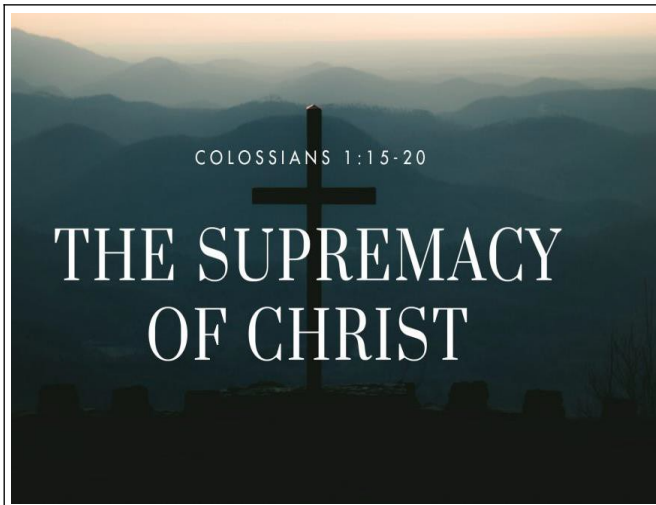
1. Christ Has the Supremacy Over All Things

- “Firstborn” also refers to the firstfruits, especially in relation to resurrection: **“Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him.” (1 Corinthians 15:23, NIV)**

- **“Before all creation”** emphasizes Christ’s position as Creator.

He stands above everything that has been created, because **“all things have been created through him and for him.” (Colossians 1:16, NIV)**

- This statement does not mean “among all created beings, Christ was the first one created.” Such an interpretation makes Christ a created being rather than the Creator. Throughout history, every heresy that denies the deity of Christ—including modern-day Jehovah’s Witnesses—has adopted this incorrect view.



Christ Preeminent

2. Christ Has the Supremacy in the Church

• *“He is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him.”*

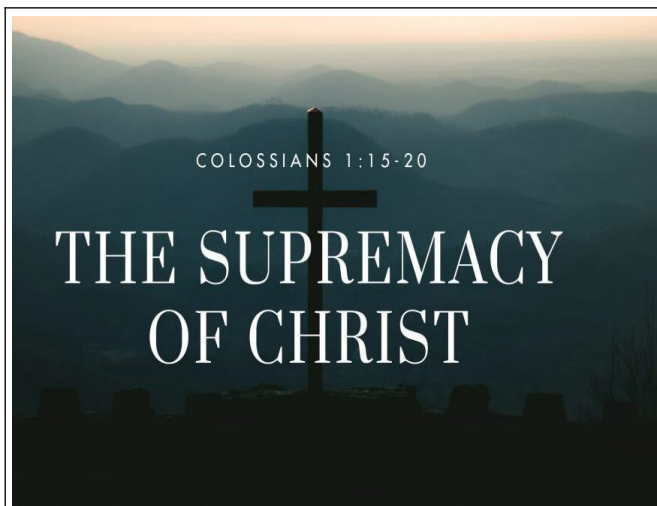
(Colossians 1:18–19, NIV)

The church (Ecclesia) is “the gathering of Christ’s disciples.”

Christ is the head of the church, and the church is the body of Christ.

This is an extremely important truth. When it is faithfully followed, believers are edified, the church is blessed, and Christ is glorified.

• *Christ holds first place **in the worship** of the church, **in the message** of the church, **in the mission** of the church, and **in the administration** of the church.*



Christ Preeminent

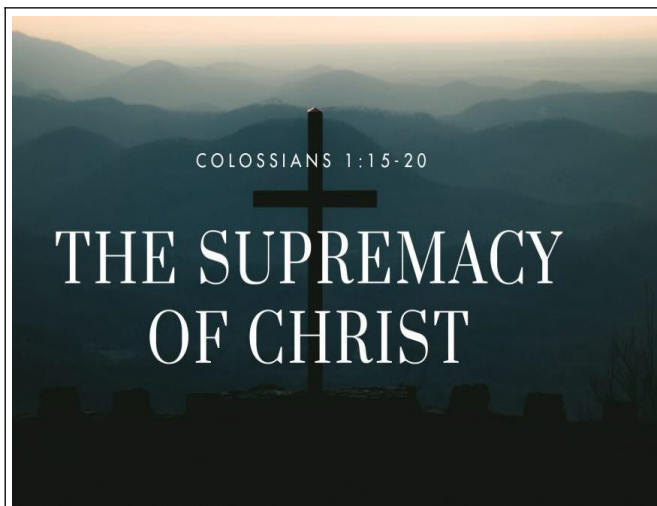
2. Christ Has the Supremacy in the Church

- *The worship of the church must exalt Christ, praising His grace and truth, His redemption and resurrection.*
- *The message of the church must be centered on Christ, with other biblical stories serving as support, because all revelation leads people to Christ.*

- *The mission of the church is **“to make people disciples of Jesus.”***

Preaching the gospel is not preaching religion—it is preaching Jesus. The purpose of believing in the Lord is not to become a religious person, but to follow Jesus. The Great Commission is not merely about giving offerings or going on short-term mission trips; it is to make disciples of all nations for the Lord.

- *The administration of the church must submit to Christ. Do not **“strive to be the greatest,”** and do not act out of personal emotion. The whole church must honor Christ as the head, seeking and obeying the will of the Lord.*



Christ Preeminent

3. Christ Has the Supremacy in Redemption

- *“And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.”*

(Colossians 1:20, NIV)

- *Christ alone occupies the position of Savior, “for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:12, NIV)

• All “other gospels”—that is, false gospels—add additional requirements outside of Jesus Christ, such as circumcision in ancient times or speaking in tongues in modern times.

Brothers and sisters, the gospel is pure: it is Christ alone, with nothing added. Christ alone is the Savior; apart from Him, there is no salvation!

Colossian Heresy



- The main purpose of Paul’s writing of the Book of Colossians was to refute heresy and to eliminate all errors by exalting Christ.

- The so-called “Colossian heresy” is described in detail in chapter 2. In Paul’s other epistles, the opponents he refuted were Jewish legalists, but the Colossian heresy was quite different.

It was a hybrid monster—part religion, part philosophy, part Judaism, and part

paganism. Let us see how Paul describes it:

- **“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.” (Colossians 2:8, NIV)**



Colossian Heresy

- *“Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you.” (Colossians 2:16–18, NIV)*

- *“Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world,*

why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: ‘Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!’? These rules, which have to do with things that are all destined to perish with use, are based on merely human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.” (Colossians 2:21–23, NIV)



Colossian Heresy

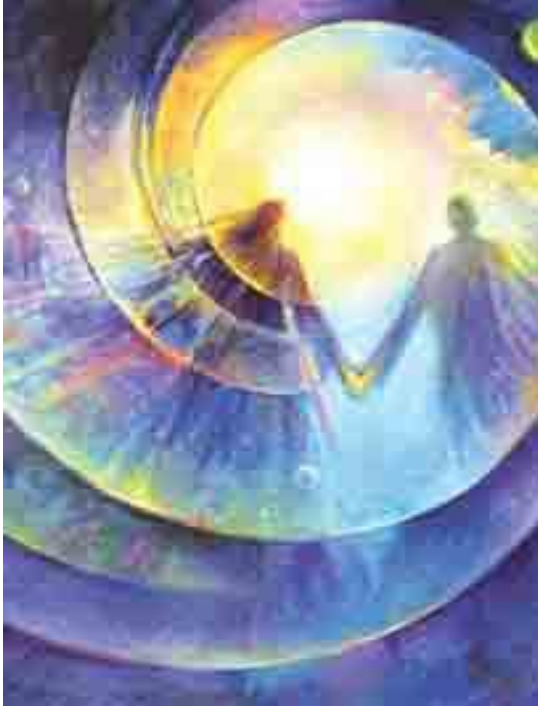
• Based on the above passages, let us see what components made up the Colossian heresy:

1. **Formalism** : From Judaism—requiring circumcision (2:11) and observing regulations about food, festivals, New Moon celebrations, and Sabbaths (2:16).

They believed that for a person to be saved, faith in Jesus was not enough; one must also keep religious rituals.

Paul refuted this, because salvation is “Christ alone, only Christ.”

2. **Asceticism**: Submitting to rules such as “do not handle, do not taste, do not touch,” displaying false humility, and harsh treatment of the body. This included elements of Greek Stoic philosophy and early forms of the heretical Gnostic movement (Gnosticism, which had early forms in the first century and flourished in the second century).



Colossian Heresy

3. **Worship of Angels:** They believed that between God and humans existed multiple layers of angels or “lesser gods.”

Christians, therefore, should worship not only the supreme God but also angels.

4. **Mystical Knowledge:** Claiming to possess deeper spiritual knowledge and divine knowledge.

5. **Diminishing Christ:** The most serious problem of the Colossian heresy was that by exalting rituals, asceticism, angels,

philosophy, and “wisdom,” they lowered Christ.

Once such heresy enters the church, Jesus becomes marginalized, and believers shift their focus to other things.



Solution

- *The various characteristics of the Colossian heresy are all present in the modern church. And the solution to every heresy is Jesus Christ.*

*The greatest feature of the Book of Colossians is **the exaltation of Christ**. The entire letter begins with praise to Christ, and after each refutation of heresy, Christ is exalted again.*

Listen to Paul's words:

- ***“For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and in Christ you have***

been brought to fullness. He is the head over every power and authority.”
(Colossians 2:9–10, NIV)



Solution

- *“In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.” (Colossians 2:11–12, NIV)*
- *“When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.” (Colossians 2:13, NIV)*



Solution

• *“These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:17, NIV)*

• *“Since you died with Christ to the elemental spiritual forces of this world, why, as though you still belonged to the world, do you submit to its rules: ‘Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!’?” (Colossians 2:20, NIV)*

• *“For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:3–4, NIV)*



Solution

• *Reading the Book of Colossians helps us understand:*

- 1. A church that does not exalt Christ is easily infiltrated by heresy.*
- 2. So-called heresy is anything that exalts something other than Jesus Christ, such as religion, philosophy, rituals, spiritual knowledge, health and wealth, racial differences, ideologies, political positions, and so on.*
- 3. Eliminating heresy requires not only refuting error but exalting Christ.*

Otherwise, it only treats the symptoms but not the root. Christ must be exalted in every aspect of the church—worship, message, gospel, administration, and more.

The Apostle's Creed

- *I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth.*
- *I believe in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; on the third day He rose from the dead; He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from there He will come again to judge the living and the dead.*
- *I believe in the Holy Spirit. I believe in the holy universal church. I believe in the communion of saints. I believe in the forgiveness of sins. I believe in the resurrection of the body. I believe in eternal life. Amen.*

The Nicene Creed, AD 325 Version

- *We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.*
- *And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, that is, of the substance of the Father; God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father; through whom all things in heaven and on earth were made. For us humans and for our salvation He came down, was incarnate, and became man; He suffered, and on the third day He rose again; He ascended into heaven and will come again to judge the living and the dead.*
- *And in the Holy Spirit.*

The Nicene Creed, AD 381 Version

- *We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.*
- *And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light from Light, true God from true God; begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father; through whom all things were made. For us humans and for our salvation He came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary was incarnate and became man; for us He was crucified under Pontius Pilate, suffered, and was buried; according to the Scriptures He rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father; He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.*
- *And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets. We believe in one holy, universal, apostolic church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.*

Colossians and Ephesians

- *Colossians is the sister epistle of Ephesians. Their contents are very similar, both belonging to “Christology,” explaining the identity and status of Jesus Christ and His relationship with the church.*
- *The main content of Colossians chapters 3–4 also appears in Ephesians. Colossians is the shorter version; Ephesians is the expanded version. For example, regarding the relationship between husband and wife, Colossians has only two verses (3:18–19), while Ephesians has twelve (5:22–33). For more detailed teaching, refer to Ephesians.*

Status and Conduct

- *“Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.” (Colossians 3:1–4, NIV)*
- *“Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.” (Colossians 3:5–10, NIV)*

Status and Conduct

- *Colossians has four chapters: the first two teach doctrine, the last two teach Christian living.*

The theme of 3:1–10 is “Status and Conduct”: Whenever the text says “already”, it refers to the believer’s status; whenever it says “must”, it refers to the believer’s conduct. Christians must know their status and then live in a way that matches that status.

Our status in Christ:

- 1. We will be raised with Christ — 3:1*
- 2. We have already died with Christ, and our life is hidden with Christ in God — 3:3*
- 3. We have already taken off the old self and put on the new self — 3:9–10*

Status and Conduct

Our conduct in Christ:

- 1. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things — 3:2*
- 2. Put to death what belongs to the earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed (which is idolatry) — 3:5*
- 3. Rid yourselves of anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language; do not lie to one another — 3:8–9*

You Are God's Chosen People

- *When we hear “God’s chosen people,” Christians often think of Israel, but not themselves. Scripture repeatedly reminds believers: you are Abraham’s descendants, God’s chosen, holy and dearly loved!*
- *“Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.” (Colossians 3:12, NIV)*
- *“But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9, NIV)*
- *“Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.” (Galatians 3:7, NIV)*
- *“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (Galatians 3:29, NIV)*

Love Is the Bond of Perfection

• *Colossians 3:12–17 is one of the best teachings on church life and is worth frequent reading and faithful obedience:*

1. As God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

2. If anyone has a grievance against another, forgive as the Lord forgave you.

3. Above all these virtues, put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

4. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts; you were called to peace as one body; and be thankful.

5. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts.

6. Whatever you do, do it in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Principles of Service

- *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”
(Colossians 3:23–24, NIV)*

- *Colossians 3:18–4:1 teaches Christian relationships—between husband and wife, parents and children, masters and servants.*

In this passage, the principle of Christian service is emphasized: We serve the Lord Christ. Service must begin from the heart; it is done for the Lord, not for people.

- *This principle “**serving the Lord from the heart**” is crucial. When followed, church ministries become harmonious, complete, and fruitful. When ignored, ministries become chaotic, full of complaints, and lacking responsibility.*

Principles of Service

• *For example, teaching Sunday school: Reviewing the lesson only right before class, improvising during the session, asking others to share just to fill time—without careful study, understanding the background, or preparing discussion questions.*

Or leading worship: Not reviewing the order of service beforehand, not planning transitions, resulting in confusion, omissions, or incorrect announcements.

Or serving as coworkers, board members, or deacons: Not knowing one's responsibilities, not completing assigned tasks, not considering how one's ministry fits into the whole church—just showing up to meetings and doing things perfunctorily.

All these unhealthy patterns ultimately come from one root: the person does not feel they are serving the Lord, nor do they serve from the heart. They are performing for people, and often poorly. Since “the issues of life flow from the heart,” when the heart is wrong, good fruit cannot grow.

A Warm and Personal Closing Greeting

• *Paul not only preached truth but also cared deeply for his coworkers. At the end of his letters, he often mentioned people by name one by one, expressing rich human warmth.*

This reminds us that the church is not merely a place for teaching doctrines or doing ministry; even more importantly, it is a place where people cherish and care for one another.

• *Colossians 4:7–18 contains a twelve-verse greeting, mentioning the following ten individuals:*

1. The letter-carrier Tychicus
2. Onesimus, the runaway slave
3. Aristarchus, who was imprisoned together with Paul
4. Mark, the cousin of Barnabas
5. Jesus, who is called Justus
6. Epaphras, who came from Colossae to Rome to visit Paul
7. Luke, the beloved doctor
8. Demas, the coworker
9. Nympha of Laodicea
10. Archippus of Colossae

The Biblical Author Mark

- *God wrote the books of Scripture through human hands, and one of them is the author of the Gospel of Mark—John, who is called Mark.*

- *“When this had dawned on him, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.” (Acts 12:12, NIV)*

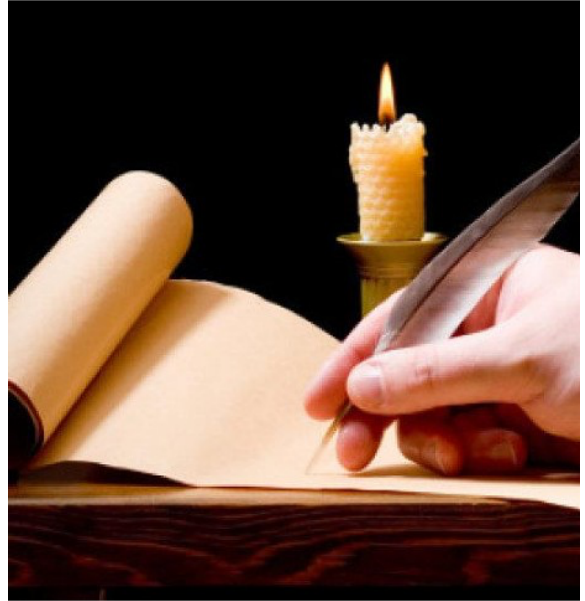
- *“When Barnabas and Saul had finished their mission, they returned from Jerusalem, taking with them John, also called Mark.” (Acts 12:25)*

- *“When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John was with them as their helper... From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem.” (Acts 13:5, 13, NIV)*



The Biblical Author Mark

• *“Barnabas wanted to take John, also called Mark, with them, but Paul did not think it wise to take him, because he had deserted them in Pamphylia and had not continued with them in the work. They had such a sharp disagreement that they parted company. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and left, commended by the believers to the grace of the Lord.” (Acts 15:37–40,)*



- *“My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.)” (Colossians 4:10, NIV)*
- *“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.” (2 Timothy 4:11, NIV)*

The Biblical Author Mark

- *Relationships between people cannot be judged only in the short term; they must be viewed over the long term.*

A relationship that begins well may later become strained; a relationship that begins poorly may later improve.

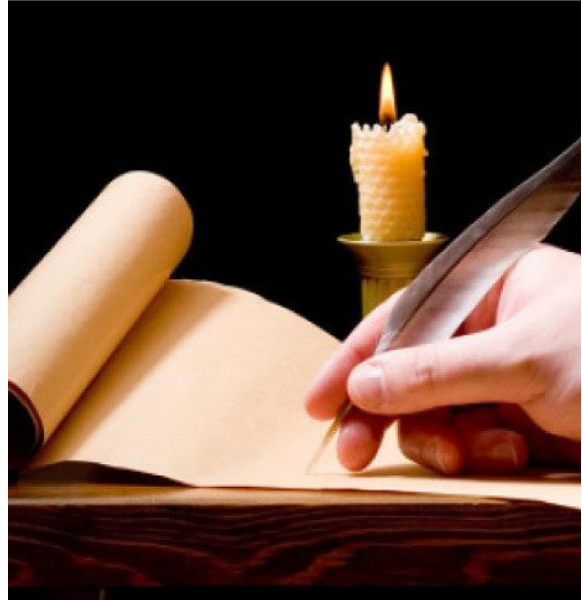
The relationship between Paul and Mark is a clear example—good at first, then bad, then good again.

- *On the first missionary journey, Paul and Barnabas traveled together and brought young Mark as their assistant. Mark could not endure the hardship and left midway to return home.*

Paul was someone who would risk his life for the Lord's work, and he expected the same level of commitment from his coworkers. Naturally, he looked down on Mark for quitting halfway.

When the second missionary journey came, Barnabas wanted to bring Mark again, but Paul firmly refused. The disagreement became so sharp that they parted ways and went in different directions.

- *Many years passed, and Paul grew old. Was he still angry with Mark? Did he still look down on him? From Paul's two letters, we see some clues.*



The Biblical Author Mark

- At the end of Colossians, Paul instructed the church: ***“If Mark comes to you, welcome him.”***

The Mark who once could not persevere had now persevered and continued serving the Lord. Paul was no longer angry with Mark; he cared about him and wanted the Colossians to receive him warmly.

- At the end of 2 Timothy, Paul told Timothy: ***“Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.”*** Paul had completely changed his view of Mark. He now considered Mark a useful and valuable coworker.

The elderly Paul appreciated Mark, valued him, and cared for him.

And Mark? Knowing that Paul now regarded him highly must have brought him great comfort. More importantly, Mark became a faithful servant of the Lord Jesus— through him the Gospel of Mark was written, and through him the gospel was carried to Egypt.





1 & 2 Thessalonians

Paul's Establishment of the Thessalonian Church (Acts 17:1–10)

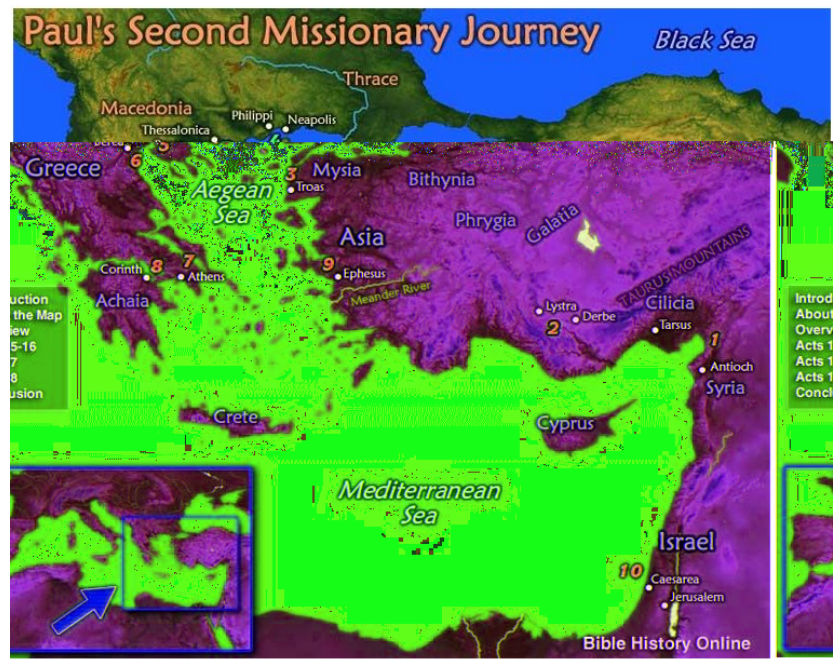
- 17:1 Paul and Silas passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia and came to *Thessalonica*, where there was a Jewish synagogue.
- 17:2 As was his custom, Paul went into the synagogue, *and on three Sabbath days* he reasoned with them from the Scriptures,
- 17:3 explaining and proving that the Messiah had to suffer and rise from the dead. “*This Jesus* I am proclaiming to you *is the Messiah*,” he said.
- 17:4 Some of the Jews were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, as did a large number of *God-fearing Greeks* and quite a few prominent women.
- 17:5 But *other Jews* were jealous; so they rounded up some bad characters from the marketplace, formed a mob and started a riot in the city. They rushed to Jason's house in search of Paul and Silas to bring them out to the crowd.

- 17:6 *But when they did not find them, they dragged Jason and some other believers before the city officials, shouting: “These men who have caused trouble all over the world have now come here,*
- 17:7 *and Jason has welcomed them into his house. They are all defying Caesar’s decrees, saying that there is another king, one called Jesus.”*
- 17:8 *When they heard this, the crowd and the city officials were thrown into turmoil.*
- 17:9 *Then they made Jason and the others post bond and let them go.*
- 17:10 *As soon as it was night, **the believers** sent Paul and Silas away to Berea.*

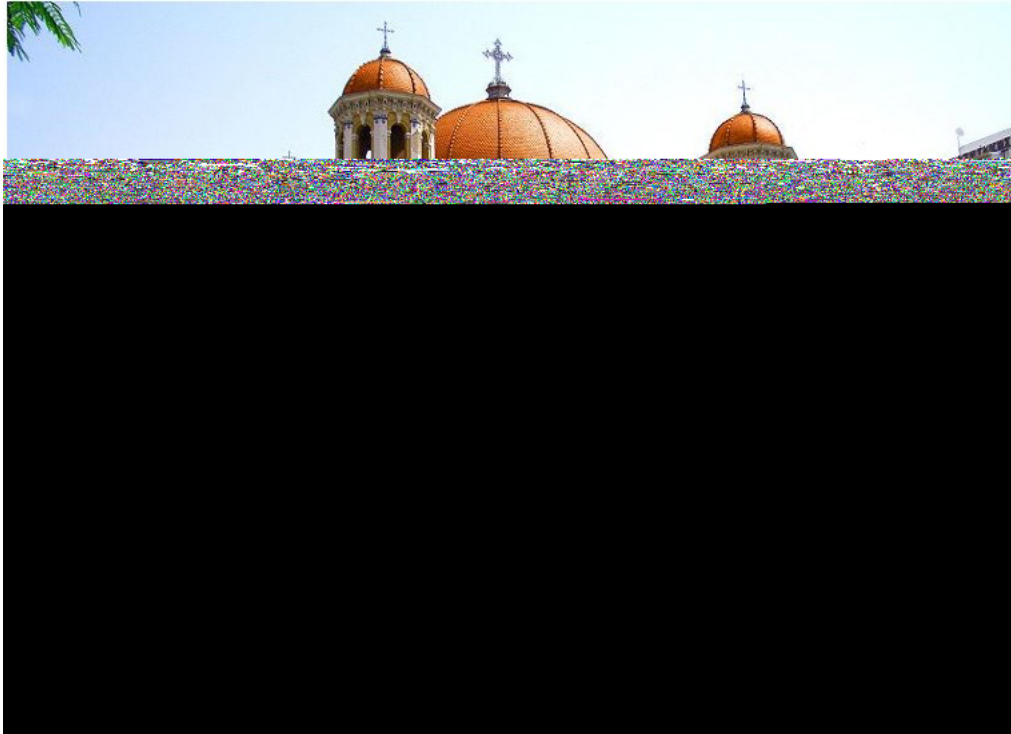
Thessalonica: A Church Not as “Noble”

- *As soon as it was night, the believers sent Paul and Silas to Berea. On arriving there, they went to the Jewish synagogue. **Now the Berean Jews were of more noble character than those in Thessalonica**, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Many of them believed, as did also a number of prominent Greek women and many Greek men.*
- *But when **the Jews in Thessalonica** learned that Paul was preaching the word of God in Berea, they went there too, agitating the crowds and stirring them up.*

Paul's Second Missionary Journey, 51 A.D. (Thessalonica was the 5th stop)



Metropolitan Church of Thessaloniki



Outline of 1 Thessalonians

• *The content of 1 Thessalonians contains little doctrinal teaching; it focuses mainly on Christian living—very practical.*

The five chapters can be divided into two sections:

1. Section One: *The Minister and the Believers (We and You) -Chapters 1–3*

2. Section Two: *Faith and Life — Chapters 4–5*

Section One: The Minister and the Believers

- *We Thank God for You — 1:1–10*
 - *We thank God for you, remembering you in our prayers...*
 1. *Your work produced by faith (ministry)*
 2. *Your labor prompted by love (daily life)*
 3. *Your endurance inspired by hope in our Lord Jesus Christ (hope is waiting for God by faith)*

- *You are chosen by the Lord, because...*
 - *Our gospel came to you not simply with words,*
 - *but also with:*
 1. *Power*
 2. *The Holy Spirit*
 3. *Deep conviction*

- *These three are God's work, moving people to accept the gospel, showing that they are God's chosen.*

- *You became a model to all believers, because...*
 1. *The word of the Lord rang out from you,*
 2. *You turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God,*
 3. *You wait for His Son from heaven.*
- *Evangelizing, serving God, and waiting for Christ's return—these three are marks of genuine believers.*

A Defense of Our Ministry — 2:1–12

- *A necessary defense*
 - *When God’s servants are attacked, they must defend themselves.*
 - *The purpose is not personal honor but the benefit of believers.*
 - *When believers are spiritually young, false teachers may take advantage of them. If trials also arise, believers may easily be shaken.*
 - *To prevent believers from being misled, God’s servants must defend their integrity so believers will trust their guidance and walk worthy of God.*

- *Paul's defense:*

- *Our appeal does not spring from error, impurity, or deception.*
- *We are not trying to please people but God, who tests our hearts.*
- *We never used flattery, as you know, nor did we put on a mask to cover up greed—God is our witness.*
- *You are witnesses, and so is God, of how holy, righteous, and blameless we were among you who believed.*
- *You know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children—encouraging, comforting, and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory.*

We Want to See You Again — 2:13–3:13

- *You are our joy (if you stand firm)*
 - *“For what is our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when he comes? Is it not you? Indeed, you are our glory and joy.”*
- *I sent Timothy to you (because I was concerned)*
 - *“When we could stand it no longer... we sent Timothy... to strengthen and encourage you in your faith... to find out about your faith. I was afraid that the tempter had tempted you and that our labors might have been in vain.”*

- *Timothy brought back good news*

- *“Timothy has just now come to us from you and has brought good news about your faith and love...”*

1. *In all our distress and persecution, we were encouraged because of your faith.*

2. *Now we really live, since you are standing firm in the Lord.*

3. *We rejoice greatly before God because of you—how can we thank God enough for you?*

- *Because Paul heard that the Thessalonian believers were strong in faith, he was (1) comforted, (2) revived, and (3) filled with joy.*

- *A true servant of God does not care about personal honor but deeply cares about the faith of believers. When he hears that believers stand firm, he is comforted and joyful, and thanks God for such joy.*

- *I want to see you again*

- *“Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. May our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus clear the way for us to come to you.”*

- *God’s servants travel to do the Lord’s work.*

Paul wanted to see the Thessalonians again to supply what was lacking in their faith, to build them up in truth, so their faith would grow stronger.