

We are about to begin reading one of the most remarkable books in the Bible—the Epistle to the Colossians. This short letter is packed with truth. Many scholars have noted that Colossians presents one of the most complete and elevated views of Christ in the entire Bible. That may sound like a bold statement, but as we read verse by verse through this letter, you will see exactly why it is true.

What makes Colossians especially important is how relevant it is to the day in which we live. Paul wrote this letter nearly two thousand years ago, yet the issues he addresses are the very same struggles facing the church today—spiritual confusion, doctrinal compromise, and a tendency to drift away from Christ’s rightful place of supremacy. The problems may wear modern clothing, but at their core, they are ancient.

William Welty, the founder of the International Standard Version Bible, draws a helpful connection that sets the stage for this letter. He points us back to the Apostle John, exiled on the lonely island of Patmos, receiving what would become the most exalted prophetic vision ever given to a man. In that vision, the resurrected and glorified Jesus Christ dictates seven letters to seven first-century churches. With eyes like flames of fire and feet like glowing bronze, the God-Man—once dead and now alive forevermore—speaks with sobering clarity and authority.

One of those letters reveals something startling. Jesus Christ is sickened by lukewarm Christianity. The language He uses is strong—stronger than many people are comfortable with today—but it leaves no room for misunderstanding. Christ openly rejects complacent, self-satisfied faith that lacks passion, repentance, and obedience.

Welty then reflects on the world situation at the time he was writing, during the global financial collapse of 2009. Nations that once confidently declared, “I am rich and need nothing,” were suddenly shaken by instability and uncertainty. He connects that moment to biblical warnings, reminding us that God disciplines those He loves and refines His people through adversity. Hard times have a way of exposing what we truly trust.

That brings us directly to Colossians. This letter serves as a roadmap for believers living in times of spiritual pressure and cultural confusion. It prepares God’s people to stand firm, to grow in maturity, and to live with an eternal perspective rooted in Christ’s kingdom.

Welty closes his foreword by quoting a haunting medieval poem carved into the door of a cathedral in Germany. Line after line exposes the gap between professing Christ with the lips and denying Him with the life. The poem ends with a sobering warning: “When I condemn you, do not blame Me.” That poem captures the very heart of the problem Colossians addresses—not open hostility toward Christ, but the quiet, subtle displacement of His preeminence.

As we turn to the letter itself, it helps to understand its broader biblical setting. The seven churches addressed in Revelation chapters 2 and 3 were real, historical congregations, confirmed by archaeology. Yet each letter closes with the words, “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.” That makes the message timeless, personal, and applicable to every generation of believers.

There are several layers of application—local, general, and personal—but there is also a prophetic dimension. When examined carefully, the seven churches appear to correspond to seven successive eras of church history. The order matters. Each church's name, condition, commendation, rebuke, and promise align with a particular period.

Two of the seven churches receive no commendation at all, and Laodicea is one of them. That alone should get our attention.

This is especially significant for Colossians because Laodicea is mentioned directly in the letter. Colossae and Laodicea were only about a mile apart, and Paul instructed the churches to exchange letters. What was happening in one church directly affected the other.

It is also interesting to note that Paul himself wrote letters to seven churches. When we compare Paul's epistles with the seven letters in Revelation, remarkable parallels emerge. Philippians aligns with Smyrna, Corinthians with Pergamos, Galatians with Thyatira, Romans with Sardis, Thessalonians with Philadelphia, and Colossians with Laodicea. Paul was not intentionally constructing a prophetic pattern, yet the fingerprints of the Holy Spirit are unmistakable.

Colossians, then, speaks powerfully to the condition of the church in its final phase—an era marked by spiritual self-sufficiency, philosophical compromise, and a diminishing reverence for the absolute authority of Jesus Christ.

Paul wrote Colossians around A.D. 60 to 62 while imprisoned in Rome. Though chained to a Roman guard, he writes with clarity, authority, and joy. The letter was prompted by reports from Epaphras, one of Paul's converts and likely the founder of the Colossian church. The church itself was primarily Gentile, about five years old, and located in a cultural crossroads where Eastern mysticism, Jewish legalism, Greek philosophy, and pagan superstition all converged.

The false teachings troubling the church are often grouped under the label "Gnosticism." While the full system developed later, its roots are clearly present here. These teachings promised deeper, secret knowledge and promoted a spiritual elite. They mixed mysticism, astrology, angel worship, ascetic practices, and legalistic rules with Christian terminology.

At the heart of all these errors was a distorted view of Jesus Christ. Some denied His true humanity. Others denied His full deity. Still others reduced Him to one intermediary among many spiritual beings. Paul does not begin by attacking these teachers directly. Instead, he confronts every error by exalting Christ—lifting Him to His rightful place of absolute preeminence¹.

And that is exactly what we will see as we begin reading this powerful letter.

Colossians sets before us a clear and powerful picture of who Jesus Christ is. He is fully God and fully man. He is the Creator of all things and the One who sustains all things. He is the Head of the

¹ In a biblical and theological context—especially in the Book of Colossians—**preeminence** carries the idea of **absolute supremacy**. When Scripture speaks of Christ having preeminence, it means that Jesus Christ is **first in everything**:

First in creation; First in authority; First in the Church; First in redemption; and First in worship and devotion. Preeminence does not mean that Christ is merely prominent or important; it means He is **without equal** and **above all**, deserving the central place in all things. In simple terms, **preeminence means "first place—no exceptions."**

Church, victorious over every spiritual power, and completely sufficient for salvation and for the Christian life. Nothing needs to be added to Him. The moment we try to add anything, we actually take away from His glory.

Paul makes it very clear that true spirituality is not found in rules, rituals, special diets, mystical experiences, or philosophical systems. Those things may look spiritual on the surface, but they have no power to deal with the real problem of sin or to produce genuine holiness. Real growth comes from a living relationship with Jesus Christ. It flows out of union with Him, not from outward disciplines or human methods.

That is why the message of Colossians is so timely for us today. Many modern movements mix Christianity with Eastern practices, self-help ideas, ritualism, or spiritual speculation. They may still use Christian language, and they may even speak highly of Jesus, but they subtly push Him off center. They do not openly deny Christ; they simply refuse to give Him the place of absolute preeminence.

Paul answers all of this with one simple and powerful truth: Christ is enough.

Key Verses:

“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.” (Colossians 1:15)

“And He is the head of the body, the church, who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the preeminence.” (Colossians 1:18)

“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God.” (Colossians 3:1)

The structure of the letter reinforces that message. In chapter 1, Christ’s preeminence is declared. In chapter 2, it is defended against false teaching. In chapters 3 and 4, it is worked out in everyday life—in personal holiness, relationships, work, worship, and witness.

Notice that Paul does not begin by attacking error. He begins by exalting Christ. That is a lesson for us. The best protection against deception is not an obsession with false teaching, but a clear, biblical, exalted view of Jesus Christ.

As we read through Colossians, we will let the Word of God speak for itself. We will see why Paul repeatedly uses words like “all,” “fullness,” and “complete,” and how he takes the language of the false teachers and turns it on its head by pointing us to Christ as the true source of wisdom and knowledge.

And the conclusion is wonderfully simple: if you have Christ, you lack nothing. He is preeminent. He is sufficient. And He alone deserves our full devotion and allegiance.