



Wednesday in the Word

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Colossians

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For maps, charts, bible study resources and podcasts related to this study, visit:
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Chronology of the Apostle Paul

Approx. Date	Reference	Description	Epistle (approx date)	Emperor
5 AD	Acts 22:3; Phil 3:5; Acts 22:28;	Born a Jew in the City of Tarsus; Roman citizen; studied at the school of Gamaliel in Jerusalem; Pharisee		
32 AD	Acts 7:58; 8:1	Present at Stephen's stoning		
33-34 AD	Acts 8:1-3 Phil 3:6	Persecutor of the church		
34 AD	Acts 9:1-19	Paul converted on the road to Damascus		Tiberius (14-37)
34-37 AD	Gal. 1:15-17 Acts 9:20-25 2 Cor 11:32-33	Travels to Arabia and remains there Returns to Damascus		Caligula (37-41)
37 AD	Acts 9:26-29 Gal 1:18 Acts 9:30	Goes to Jerusalem with Barnabas Returns to Tarsus in Celicia		
46 AD	Acts 11:19-26 Acts 11:27-29	Barnabas brings Paul to Antioch Barnabas & Paul take famine relief to Jerusalem		Claudius (41-54) Famine in Rome (42)
46-48 AD	Acts 13 & 14	First Journey	Galatians (48 after journey)	
49 AD	Acts 15:1-35	Jerusalem council		Claudius expels Jews from Rome (49)
49-52 AD	Acts 15:36-18:22	Second Journey	1 & 2 Thess (50)	Rise of the Zealots (50)
53-57 AD	Acts 18:23-21:16	Third Journey	1 Cor (55) 2 Cor (56) Romans (57)	Nero (54-68)
57-59 AD	Acts 21:17-26:32	Roman arrest in Jerusalem & Caesarea		
59 AD	Acts 27:1-28:16	Journey to Rome		
60-62 AD	Acts 28:17-31	1st Roman imprisonment	Colossians Philemon Ephesians Philippians	
63 AD		Released from prison	1 Timothy Titus	Fire at Rome (64)
65-66 AD		2nd Roman imprisonment & execution	2 Timothy	

Principal People in Colossians

Paul	Timothy	Epaphras	Tychicus
<p>Col 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,</p> <p>Col 1:23 Col 4:18</p>	<p>Col 1:1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,</p>	<p>Col 1:7 just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf</p> <p>Col 4:12</p>	<p>Col 4:7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.</p>
<p>Acts 18:23-21:16 Third Journey</p> <p>Acts 27:1-28:16 Journey to Rome</p> <p>Acts 28:17-31 1st Roman imprisonment</p>	<p>Acts 16:1 Acts 17:14-15 Acts 18:5 Acts 19:22 Acts 20:4 Rom 16:21 1Cor 4:17; 16:10 2Cor 1:1; 1:19 Phlp 1:1; :19 1Thes 1:1; 3:2; 3:6 2Thes 1:1 1Tim 1:2; 1:18; 6:20 2Tim 1:2 Phm 1:1 Heb 13:23</p>	<p>Phm 1:23 Phlp 2:25; 4:18 (Epaphroditus)</p>	<p>Acts 20:4 Eph 6:21 2Tim 4:12 Titus 3:12</p>
Also mentioned in Colossians			
Aristarchus	Col 4:10	Acts 19:29; Acts 20:4; Acts 27:2; Phm 1:24	
Archippus	Col 4:17	Phm 1:2	
Demas	Col 4:14	2Tim 4:10; Phm 1:24	
Jesus/Justus	Col 4:11		
Luke	Col 4:14	2Tim 4:11; Phm 1:24	
Mark	Col 4:10	Acts 12:12; Acts 12:25; Acts 15:37-39; 2Tim 4:11; Phm 1:24; 1Pet 5:13	
Onesimus	Col 4:9	Philemon	

Lesson 1 - Background

Optional: Read the Preface, Chapter 1 and Chapter 3 in *How to Read the Bible For All It's Worth*, by Gordon D. Fee and Douglas Stuart.

Read Chapters 3-5 of *Basics of Bible Interpretation* by Bob Smith (Free online: <http://www.raystedman.org/leadership/smith/>).

1. **Place of Writing:** Paul never visited Colossae (2:1). The church was likely founded by Epaphras as a result of Paul's ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10). Epaphras visited Paul during his imprisonment to report on the situation at Colossae (Acts 28; Col 4:12-13). Using the chart of the "Chronology of Paul" determine the a) date of writing; b) Other epistles written at the same time.
2. Read Acts 28:16,30; Col 4:18; Ephesians 3:1; 4:1; 6:19-20 to make the likely assumption of where Paul was located when he wrote this letter. Add any insight to the nature of his living conditions.
3. **Destination:** Read through the letter and note the use of the second person pronoun ("you"), . What can you conclude about the recipients of the letter, the situation in the Colossian church and why Paul is writing this letter to them?
4. **Geography:** Look up Colossae in a Bible Atlas and write a brief description of where Colossae was located. For example: <http://bibleatlas.org/colossae.htm>

5. **History:** Do a little research using a Bible dictionaries, commentaries and a Bible encyclopedia. What kind of city was Colossae? How many people lived there when the gospel was being spread throughout the Mediterranean world? What were the political, religious, social and economic influences that characterized the city?

6. **Principal Personalities:** Using the Principal people chart answer the following: Who was Tychicus? Where was Tychicus from? What responsibility did Paul give Tychicus? (between A.D. 62-65) Where was Tychicus sent?

7. Who is Epaphras and what is his relationship to Paul and the church at Colossae?

8. Who is Timothy and what is his relationship to Paul and the church at Colossae?

9. Based on your reading make a preliminary outline of where the book breaks into major sections.

Lesson 2 - Colossians 1:1-12

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Make an analytical outline of chapter 1. For help see:
<http://www.wednesdayintheword.com/resources/analyticaloutline.pdf>
3. In 1:3-8, why is Paul thankful (be specific and avoid using Christian jargon).
4. Given the warnings Paul sounds in this letter, why do you think he starts the letter with being thankful for their faith?
5. Define the relationship between faith in Jesus (1:4), love for the saints (1:4) and hope (1:5)?
6. Define "knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding" (1:9) in the context of this prayer.
7. List and define keywords/concepts; for example: hope 1:5; 1:23; 1:27
8. Summarize: What is Paul praying that God that God would do for the Colossians and why? Compare this prayer with Paul's prayer in Ephesians 1:15-23.

Lesson 3 - Colossians 1:13-23

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review & revise your analytical outline of chapter 1.
3. What is the relationship between 1:9-12 and 1:13-23?

Define in context:

4. delivered/transferred 1:13;
5. redemption/forgiveness 1:14
6. image/firstborn 1:15
7. What does 1:13-20 teach about Christ?
8. Look at the use of the second person pronoun (you) in 1:20-23 and contrast the state before and after Christ.
9. Given the heresies afflicting the Colossian church, why do you think Paul emphasizes Jesus Christ and his role at this point in the letter?

Lesson 4 - Colossians 1:24-2:3

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review & revise your analytical outline of chapter 1. Begin outlining chapter 2.
3. What is the mystery in 1:26, 1:27 and 2:2?
4. What is the understanding and true knowledge in 2:1-3?
5. Define "hope of glory" in context (1:27). See also 3:4.
6. Summarize how Paul describes and explains his role. What motivates Paul to continue in the face of suffering?
7. Given the heresies afflicting the Colossian church, why would Paul remind the Colossians of his role?
8. Summarize the main point(s) or theme(s) of chapter 1 in your own words.

Lesson 5 - Colossians 2:4-15

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review and refine your analytical outline of chapter 2.
3. Define in context: persuasive argument (2:4); philosophy (2:8); empty deception (2:8); tradition (2:8); elementary principles (2:8) Read Acts 17:16-34. What does this add to your understanding of these words.
4. What are the dangers of false teaching? Compare with Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 1:3-11; Galatians 1:6-12
5. Explain 2:6-7 in your own words. Specifically what is Paul encouraging them to do and not do?
6. Review the use of the phrase "in Him", "with Him", "through Him", "by Him" and "for Him" in chapters 1-2. Then focus on the uses the "in Him/through Him" phrases in 2:9-15. Summarize what you learned.
7. Compare and contrast 2:4-8 with 2:9-15.
8. Unpack Paul's metaphors. Explain in your own words without Christian jargon what happens to "you" in 2:13-15.

Lesson 6 - Colossians 2:16-23

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review and refine your analytical outline of chapter 2.
3. What is the significance of "therefore" in 2:16? Note particularly the verses that precede and follow it.
4. Compare and contrast the shadow and the substance in 2:17.
5. Define "elementary principles" (2:20) and "appearance of wisdom in self-made religion" (2:23). Why are they of no value?
6. What is Paul urging the Colossians to avoid in this section? Why?
7. Elaborate on your answer to question 4. Consider what the Colossians would be tempted to do and why Paul warns them against it. What is at stake in their choices?
8. Summarize chapter 2 in your own words.

Lesson 7 - Colossians 3:1-10

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review & revise your analytical outline of chapter 2. Begin outlining chapter 3.
3. What is the significance of "therefore" (If then in the ESV) in 3:1? "therefore" in 3:5? "but now" in 3:8?
4. Avoiding Christian vocabulary, explain what it means to die with Christ and be raised with him?
5. What does it mean to "set your mind on the things above" versus "things that are on the earth" 3:2?
6. Who are the "sons of disobedience" 3:6 and why does the wrath of God fall on them?
7. Contrast what Paul is urging the Colossians to do in 3:1-7 with what he urges them not to do 2:16-23.
8. What does Paul mean by "old self" and "new self"? Compare with Romans 6 and Ephesians 4.

Lesson 8 - Colossians 3:11-17

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review & revise your analytical outline of chapter 3.
3. Why do you think Paul picked the virtues in 3:12-13 in this context as opposed to other things he might have picked (love of money, greed, coveting, etc)?
4. What is the relationship between "love" 3:14; "unity" 3:14; "peace" 3:15 and "word of Christ" 3:16?
5. Assuming 3:17 functions as a summary of this section, explain it in your own words.
6. Summarize what you've learned so far about why Paul is writing this letter and list his main points.
7. Review the use of the phrase "in Him", "with Him", "through Him", "by Him" and "for Him" in chapters 1-3. Summarize what you learn about Christ.

Lesson 9 - Colossians 3:18-4:1

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review & revise your analytical outline of chapter 3. Begin outlining chapter 4.
3. In this section, Paul gives 3 pairs of relationships (wives/husbands, children/fathers and slaves/masters). How are the pairs similar and different?
4. Explain the relationship between 3:17 and this section 3:18-4:1.
5. Compare with Ephesians 5:21-6:9. Noting the relationship between 5:21 and what follows.
6. Compare and contrast the calling and motivation of wives, children & slaves? Note the warnings and reasons ("as is", "so that", "for")
7. Compare and contrast the calling and motivation of husbands, parents & masters? Note the warnings and reasons ("as is", "so that", "for")
8. Summarize chapter 3 in your own words.

Lesson 10 - Colossians 4:2-18

1. Read the passage several times looking for repeated words, key phrases, themes.
2. Review & revise your analytical outline of chapter 4.
3. What does it mean to "devote yourself to prayer" 4:2? Compare with Ephesians 6:18-20.
4. What does it mean to "conduct yourself with wisdom" 4:5?
5. What is "speech with grace" and "seasoned with salt" 4:6?
6. Read through the chapters 1-4 again. Using the chart on the next page, summarize the main point of each chapter.
7. What did you learn from this study that challenged you the most?
8. What did you learn that surprised you the most?
9. What did you learn from this study that encouraged you the most?

Summary Chart

Summary: The author is writing to:

CHAPTER	DIVISIONS	THEME(S)	KEY VERSE(S)
1			
2			
3			
4			