

(English Sunday School, 25-10-2015, 1200-1245)  
New Testament Survey: Colossians (12/27)

Author

The Apostle Paul

Date

Early part of the A.D. 60

Theme

Fullness and freedom in Christ

Historical Background

- 1 Paul never visited Colossae, a town about one hundred miles west of Ephesus, the church there was probably established as a result of his extended ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:8-10)
- 2 While in prison, Epaphras, a native of Colossae may have visited Paul. He may have founded the church in Colossae and his report of a developing problem in the Colossae church prompted Paul to write.
- 3 It seems that the church was coming under the influence of certain false teachers. The problem seems to be of syncretism, i.e., combining various teachings from different religions to come up with something new.
- 4 Apparently, Greek philosophy, cultic practices, Christianity, and Jewish speculations were blended together to offer a "fuller" type of spiritual experiences. Jesus was seen as one of several "deities" through which one approaches the Divine. Rigorous ascetic disciplines were used as a means to experience trance-like "visions".
- 5 In contrast to the above, Paul presents Jesus as the true Lord of the universe (1:15-18; 2:9-10), and highlights love, thankfulness, and forgiveness as the marks of true spirituality (3:12-17).

## Characteristics

- 1 Jesus Christ is the forefront of the letter as Paul demonstrates that in everything he has supremacy (1.18).
- 2 Chapters 1-2 outlines the cosmic nature of Jesus Christ who has reconciled all things to himself through his death on the cross, quite independently of any effort on our part.
3. Chapters 3-4 give the implications of Christ's lordship in terms of how those in union with him are meant to live.

## Outline

- 1:1-14 Eternal Redemption in Christ
- 1:15-23 All Reconciled in Christ
- 1:24-2:5 Full Riches in Christ
- 2:6-23 Firmly Rooted in Christ
- 3:1-4:1 Newly Robed in Christ
- 4:2-18 New Relationships in Christ

## Reflection

The Colossian heresy, like the New Age movement today, was attractive because it seemed to offer a "deeper" spirituality than what came by simply obeying Jesus. What do you speak to the people who experiment with alternative forms of spirituality?

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The New Age is a term applied to a range of spiritual or religious beliefs and practices that developed in Western nations during the 1970s. Precise scholarly definitions of the movement differ in their emphasis, largely as a result of its highly eclectic structure.

"One of the few things on which all scholars are agreed concerning New Age is that it is difficult to define. Often, the definition given actually reflects the background of the scholar giving the definition. Thus, the New Ager views New Age as a revolutionary period of history dictated by the stars; the Christian apologist has often defined new age as a cult; the historian of ideas understands it as a manifestation of the perennial tradition; the philosopher sees New Age as a monistic or holistic worldview; the sociologist describes New Age as a new religious movement (NRM); while the psychologist describes it as a form of narcissism."

— Religious studies scholar Darren Kemp, 2004.