

The
Supremacy
of Christ:
Colossians



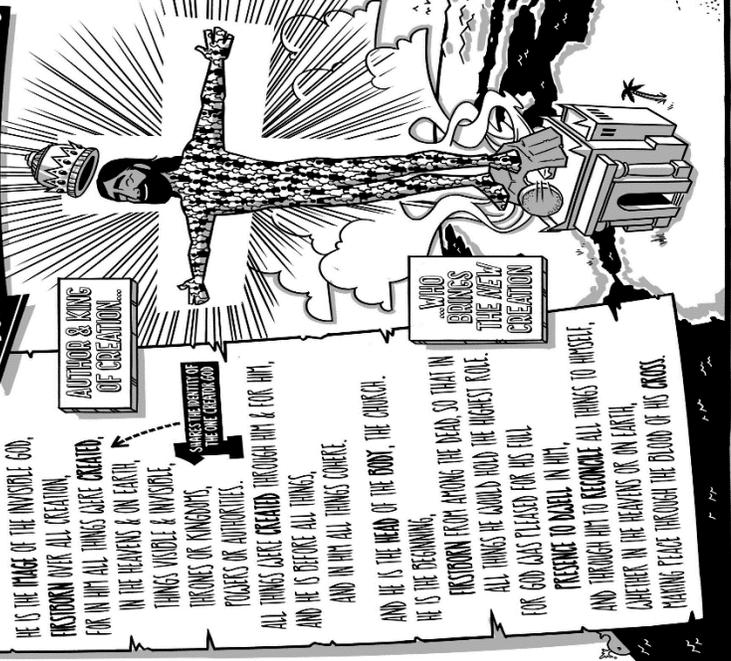
PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

NO PART OF HUMAN EXISTENCE REMAINS UNTOUCHED BY THE LOVING & LIBERATING RULE OF JESUS. WE WERE INVITED TO LIVE IN THE PRESENT AS IF THE NEW CREATION ARRIVED WHEN JESUS ROSE FROM THE DEAD.

1:1-23 THE EXALTED MESSIAH

WE THINK GOD FOR YOUR **Faith, Love, Hope,** and **Wisdom** and *Spiritual Understanding.* (1:3-5)

1:15-20 THE MESSIAH POEM
 HE IS THE IMAGE OF THE INVISIBLE GOD, PRESENT AND OVER ALL CREATION, FOR IN HIM ALL THINGS WERE CREATED, IN THE HEAVENS & ON EARTH, THINGS VISIBLE & INVISIBLE, THRONES OR KINGDOMS, POWERS OR AUTHORITIES. ALL THINGS WERE CREATED THROUGH HIM & FOR HIM, AND HE IS BEFORE ALL THINGS, AND IN HIM ALL THINGS COHESIVE. AND HE IS THE HEAD OF THE BODY, THE CHURCH. HE IS THE BEGINNING, FROM WHOM EVERYTHING BEGINS, SO THAT IN ALL THINGS HE WOULD HOLD THE HIGHEST RANK. FOR GOD WAS PLEASED FOR HIS FULL PRESENCE TO DWELL IN HIM, AND THROUGH HIM TO RECONCILE ALL THINGS TO HIMSELF, WHETHER IN THE HEAVENS OR ON EARTH, PLANNING PEACE THROUGH THE BLOOD OF HIS CROSS.



1:24-2:5 THE SUFFERING APOSTLE

FOR THE MESSIAH'S NEAR, MULTI-ETHNIC FAMILY
ANNOUNCING: JESUS IS LORD! (NOT CESAR!)
PARTICIPATION IN THE SUFFERING OF THE MESSIAH
THE MESSIAH IN YOU ALL, THE HOPE OF GLORY. (1:27)

2:6-23 THE PRESSURE TO TURN AWAY

WISDOM OF THE TORAH
GOOD INFLUENCES TO RESIST
GOING INTO THESE IS COMPROMISE!
OBSESSIVE OF THE TORAH
LEAVES THE TORAH
JESUS TRUMPHED OVER ALL SPIRITUAL POWERS (1:16)
JESUS IS THE REALITY TO WHICH THE PAWS POINTED.
JESUS FULFILLED THE LAWS WHICH LACKED TOGETHER TO CHANGE THE HEART.
JESUS IS THE REALITY TO WHICH THE LAWS POINTED.

3-4 THE RESURRECTION LIFE

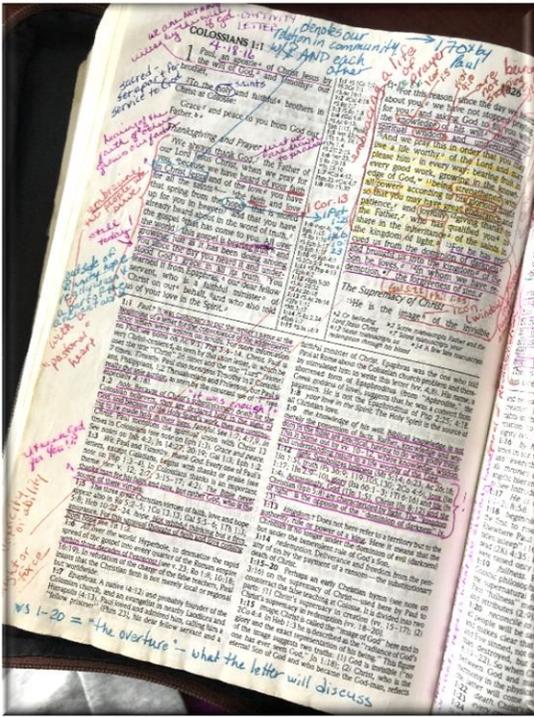
3:1-7 THE NEW HUMANITY
SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE, WHERE THE MESSIAH RULES! (3:1)
OLD HUMANITY
NEW! HUMANITY!
WISDOM, GENEROSITY, FORGIVENESS, LOVE!
DESTRUCTIVE SEVERITY & DESTRUCTIVE SPEECH
HERE NO ONE'S GREER OR REARER, CIRCUMCISED OR UNCIRCUMCISED, SLAVE OR FREE: THE MESSIAH IS ALL & IN ALL PEOPLE! (3:11)

3:10-11 THE NEW ROMAN HOUSEHOLD

HAD THE PROBLEMS OF LIFE & DEATH
JESUS IS LORD OF THE HOUSE

4:1-16 CONCLUSION

PAUL RECAPS THE ROMAN HOUSEHOLD AROUND JESUS, WHO RULES WITH SELF-GIVING LOVE.
CONSCIOUSNESS
ESCAPED SLAVE OF PHILEMON
GREET ONE ANOTHER AS A DEVELOPED BROTHER IN THE LORD. (4:9)
LET THE WORD OF CHRIST ENRICH YOU AND BRING YOU UP TO KNOWLEDGE OF THE FULL RICHES OF HIS GLORY. (4:12)



Colossians 1:1-8

¹Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. ³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love that you have for all the saints, ⁵because of the hope laid up for you in heaven. Of this you have heard before in the word of the truth, the gospel, ⁶which has come to you, as indeed in the whole world it is bearing fruit and increasing—as it also does among you, since the day you heard it and understood the grace of God in truth, ⁷just as you learned it from Epaphras our beloved fellow servant. He is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf⁸ and has made known to us your love in the Spirit.

There are some books of the Bible that really call for close scrutiny because they contain so much wisdom and point us

so quickly to Christ. Colossians is just such a letter. While this is a short letter – only 95 verses – it is worth every moment that we spend reading and digesting its content. This letter is attributed to the Apostle Paul, who signs it with the first word of the letter. While he wrote this letter and was largely responsible for helping to start the church in Colossae, he did not ever actually visit that city. There is some discussion as to exactly when he wrote this letter, although we know it was penned with he was in prison, which happened on three separate occasions. Paul was imprisoned in Caesarea (57-58AD), Rome (60-61AD), and Ephesus (53-55AD). Most scholars believe he wrote to Colossae from Ephesus. Paul clearly had many who accompanied him on his missionary journeys, and they are responsible for the beginning of many of the churches in the area. The missionary who probably began the church in Colossae was Epaphras under the supervision of Paul. Paul also includes the name *Timothy* in the byline for this letter. Timothy was Paul's mentee and close companion throughout much of his ministry. He is mentioned fondly and with great joy many times in Paul's writing. Paul names himself as "apostle" which is an important designation. An apostle is one who is sent. But this word carries more impact than simply "being sent". It carries with it the authority of the sender. Paul does not use this designation lightly. It carried great responsibility for him, the bearer of the title.

In Jewish sources, an apostle was an authorized representative of the individual or group who sent him, so that the identifying characteristic of an apostle is his *authority*. Thus the rabbis said, "The one sent by a man is as the man himself." Therefore, the apostle had to subordinate his will completely to that of the sender, as the apostle had the authority of the sender himself in the execution of his commission.

Deterding, P. E. (2003). *Concordia Commentary: Colossians* (pp. 21-22). Saint Louis, MO: CPH.

The main thrust of these introductory verses is that of hope. Hope is the *confident dependence* upon a God who can and will follow through with every single promise that He has made to us. So far, God has been faithful in the fulfillment of those promises and at this point we are awaiting the final culmination of all things in the return of Jesus on the Last Day. Hope, which is actually birthed from

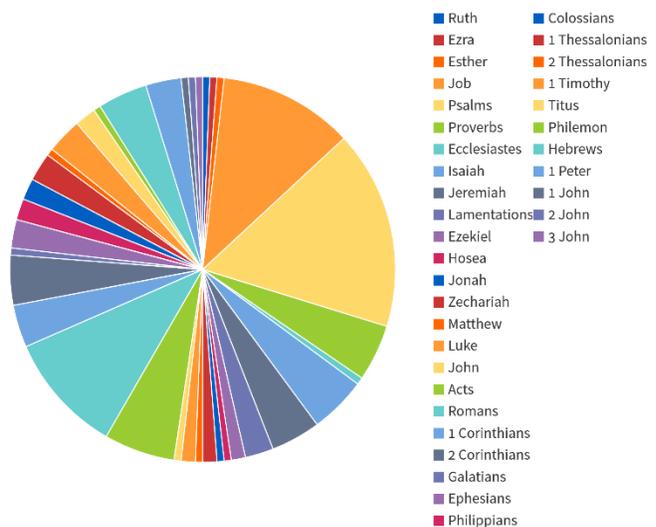
our faith, produces the ability to wait with endurance for that final reward. And endurance is indeed required, for life can be difficult sometimes. But in those difficult times we have hope. Sure, that hope wavers from time to time, but faith brings us back time and again to the knowledge of God's greatness and His sovereign power. As we read through Colossians, let's keep our minds and hearts set on that hope born of faith.



hope in ESV

Discussion Questions:

1. Other verses about *hope*:
 Romans 8:18-25
 Psalm 62:5-8
 Psalm 130
2. What does it mean to have *hope*?
 How is hope different from wishes or desires?
3. How does hope rise above difficulties or struggles?



Psalm 130

- ¹Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord!*
²O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy!
³If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand?
⁴But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared.
⁵I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope;
⁶my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning.
⁷O Israel, hope in the Lord! For with the Lord there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.
⁸And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Our Final Hope

If we follow the line of this Prayer, we find that we move from
Lament → Confession → Waiting for the Lord → Confidence in Redemption

