



COLOSSIANS
Chapter 1
December 2, 2009

Gnosticism – From gnosis, “to know.” They declared themselves to be “in the know.” Gnosticism taught that all matter is inherently evil and only the spiritual or nonmaterial is good. This led to denying the doctrines of Creation and the Incarnation.

Colossians was written from a Roman prison in approximately 60-62 A.D. during Paul’s first imprisonment. Colosse lay about one hundred miles east of Ephesus, in the Lycus River valley in Phrygia, a district of Asia Minor (Turkey). 13 miles from Hierapolis and 10 from Laodicea. Epaphras founded the church, along with those at Laodicea and Hierapolis (Col 1:7-8; 4:12-13). Founded probably during Paul’s third missionary journey, when he preached in Ephesus for two years and the Bible tells us that during that time the gospel spread through that whole area (Acts 19:10).

Theme - the sufficiency and supremacy of Christ.

Chapter 1

2 To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father - The word “holy” is translated “saints” in the other epistles but it means holy or set apart.

5 the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel – Faith, hope and love.

9 For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding – Knowledge = epignosis - super knowledge in contrast to the “super knowledge” of the Gnostics.

10 And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God - The more we grow in the knowledge of God the more we will grow in our faith (I Pet 2:2; II Pet 1:5-7; 3:18; Jude 20).

14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins - Redemption (apolutrōsis) = “to ransom in full” “to buy back” or “to save from captivity by paying a ransom.”

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation - “image” = eikon and it is where we get our English word “icon”.

(Hebrews 1:1-2) (John 1:14;14:9). Firstborn is *prōtotokos*. The first part of the word (*prōto*) can indicate “first in time” as in birth but it can also mean “first in place” (as in preeminence). (See Exod. 4:22; Deut. 21:16, 17; Ps. 89:23 in the LXX for the use of *prōtotokos* in connection with the idea of preeminence. *Firstborn* is also used of Jesus in Colossians 1:18, Romans 8:29, Hebrews 1:6, and Revelation 1:15.)

16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him - John 1:3 says that Christ created the world. Hebrews 1:2 goes even beyond that.

17 He is before all things, and in him all things hold together - The phrase *Hold together (sunestaken)* implies being compacted together in a coherent or logical way, prevented from dissolving into chaos.

“The fact that we live in a world in which practically every object is a potential nuclear explosive, without being blown to bits, is due to the extreme difficulties that attend the starting of a nuclear reaction.” (George Gamow cited in Chesnut, *The Atom Speaks*, p. 38)

“You grasp what this implies. It implies that all the massive nuclei have no right to be alive at all. Indeed, they should never have been created, and, if created, they should have blown up instantly. Yet here they all are.... Some inflexible inhibition is holding them relentlessly together. The nature of the inhibition is also a secret ... one thus far reserved by Nature for herself.” (Karl K. Darrow cited in Chesnut, *The Atom Speaks*, p. 38)

19 For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him - (fullness) *Plerōma* was a popular term used by the Gnostics to refer to divine powers and attributes, which were divided among the gods, angels and entities. Dwell is used in the sense of a *permanent dwelling (katoikeo)*.

20 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 - The blood of Christ is the only sufficient payment for our sins (Eph. 2:13; Heb. 10:19; I Pet. 1:2; Rev. 7:14).

21 Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior - alienated (*apellotriomenous*) is literally “transferred to another owner.”

26 the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints – Cf. Eph 3:6.

27 To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory - Christ, by the Holy Spirit, takes up permanent residence in all believers (cf. Rom. 8:9; 1 Cor. 6:19, 20; Eph. 2:22).