

The MYSTERY

Hidden for Ages

Is Now REVEALED

A Study of the Book of Colossians

LESSON 1

Please note as we begin our study that each day you will be asked to read the full chapter that includes the passage for the week. You may want to read the passage in different translations throughout the week (e.g. The Message, Phillips, New Living Translation, ESV, etc.). These can be accessed on www.biblegateway.com. However, the questions provided are based on the NIV translation.

This Week's Passage:
Colossians 1:1–6a

New International Version (NIV)

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

² To God's holy people in Colossae, the faithful brothers and sisters in Christ: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

³ We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴ because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people— ⁵ the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel ⁶ that has come to you.

Memory Verse: Colossians 1:9

⁹ *For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you. We continually ask God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all the wisdom and understanding that the Spirit gives, ...*

Day One: Read Colossians 1.

1. Fill in the blanks below from the greeting Paul often used in his letters:
"Paul, an _____ of Christ Jesus by _____"

a. What are some aspects of Paul's job as an apostle? (Col. 1:25; Rom. 15:15–19; Eph. 4:11–13)

- b. Why do you think Paul makes the point that he is "an apostle of Christ Jesus" (v. 1) when writing to the churches?

Apostle

The word "apostle" literally means "sent one." Apostles are "those appointed by Christ for a special function in the church. Their unique place is based not only on having witnessed the resurrection, but also on having been commissioned and empowered by the resurrected Lord to proclaim the gospel to all nations."¹

The twelve disciples chosen by Jesus were designated apostles, but Paul is also later identified as an apostle.²

- c. What are some of the reasons Paul (previously called Saul) can say that he is an apostle “by the will of God”? (Acts 22:6–15; Gal. 1:11–17; Eph. 3:2, 7–9)
2. God has “determined the times set for [us] and the exact places where [we] should live” (Acts 17:26). Like Paul’s life, your life, too, is embedded in the will of God.
- a. With this in mind, fill in the blanks with some descriptions of who you are, to acknowledge God’s hand on your life right where he has placed you.
- I am _____ by the will of God.
- I am _____ by the will of God.
- I am _____ by the will of God.
- b. In what ways does recognizing that you are in your present circumstances by the will of God impact the way you think about your life?

Day Two: Read Colossians 1.

3. Paul mentions Timothy in his greeting.
- a. What do we learn about his background in Acts 16:1–4 and 2 Timothy 1:5?
- b. What was it about Timothy that made him an excellent co-laborer with Paul? (Phil. 2:19–23)
4. Continuing his greeting, what descriptions does Paul use to address the brothers and sisters? (v. 2)
5. In verse 2, Paul describes the Colossians as “holy³ people...faithful brothers and sisters.” Those who are holy are “set apart or separated unto God, converted by his grace to be a unique and treasured possession.”⁴ Why does it make sense for holiness and faithfulness to go together? (You may want to consider 1 Pet. 2:9–10.)

6. All who believe the good news of the gospel are “in Christ” (v. 2). Being in Christ means to be “organically united to Christ, as a limb is in the body or a branch is in the tree.”⁵ With these analogies in mind, how does the fact that you are *in Christ* change how you process your circumstances, relationships, suffering...?


Day Three: Read Colossians 1.

7. It is always wise to give thought to the meaning of phrases that are familiar to us, such as Paul’s oft-used greeting, “grace⁶ and peace to you from God the Father” (v. 2). What does scripture teach us about the grace and peace that Paul wants the Colossian believers to enjoy?
Rom. 5:1–2

2 Cor. 12:9

Eph. 2:4–7


Jn. 14:27; 16:33


8. Paul is committed to praying for the Colossians even though he has not met them personally (2:1). What is Paul thankful for when he prays for them? (vv. 3–4⁷; * Gal. 5:6)

9. Who is the source of their faith and love? ( Eph. 2:8, 10; 1 Jn. 4:7–11)

Day Four: Read Colossians 1.

As chapter 1 becomes more familiar to you, pray that the Spirit would help you see it with fresh eyes.

10. What caused the Colossians’ faith and love to flourish? (v. 5;  Heb. 6:19–20)

11. What is the Colossians' hope? (Jn. 14:2–3; Phil. 3:20–21; 1 Pet. 1:3–5;  Heb. 11:13–16)

12. Although our hope for the future is secure, it is easy to lose sight of it and at times feel hopeless. What passages of scripture have brought hope to you? (vv. 5–6a)

Day Five: Read Colossians 1–4.

(You will be reading the entire book at the end of each week.)

13. Now take time to respond here to what you are learning and seeing in Colossians. You may want to write out a summary, jot down a prayer, compose a poem, or find some other way to express it here.



A Closer Look

To get the big picture of Paul's emphasis in this letter, use the supplied text of Colossians to highlight all the ways Paul emphasizes that Jesus is the source and center of all. For example, in the first two verses highlight "of Christ Jesus" and "in Christ."

*  indicates verses for further study

¹ <http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/apostle/>

² Luke 6:13; Rom. 1:1

³ In other versions, the word "holy" is translated "saints."

⁴ Sam Storms, *The Hope of Glory: 100 Daily Meditations on Colossians* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2007), 20.

⁵ http://www.cslewisinstitute.org/In_Christ_page2

⁶ Strong's' definition: "xáris is preeminently used of the Lord's favor – freely extended to give Himself away to people (because He is 'always leaning toward them')." <http://biblehub.com/greek/5485.htm>

⁷ Note: "saints" in verse 4 is the same Greek word translated "holy" in verse 2.