

Day 1

-  Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.
-  Conventions used in these StudySheets:
- † “Christ Jesus:” we in the United States are traditionally given birth names with a first, middle, and surname (last-name or family-name). Back in the time of Jesus, people were called ‘first-name, son of father’s first-name’ (e.g., Jesus, son of Joseph). Because “Christ” is Jesus’ title, these StudySheets will frequently refer to Jesus as ‘Christ Jesus’. The purpose is to avoid the American naming convention that might indicate “Christ” is Jesus’ last name (surname). By the way the Apostle Paul seems to use Christ Jesus or Jesus Christ interchangeably.
 - † Pencil icon () indicates comments or notes; since commentary is not Holy Scripture, comments are purposely less prominent (i.e., font-size is smaller).
 - † Pronunciation helps: I have added some ‘helps’ to aid in pronouncing some of the more difficult names within the verses of this Book. While I am not attempting to provide a pronunciation key to the ancient dialect, I am hopeful the helps will provide a common pronunciation when reading some of these more difficult names.
-  The Godhead: The best analogy I have heard to describe the Godhead of God the Father, Christ Jesus the Son, and the Holy spirit is to envision a three-fingered hand (or a three-leaf clover). While each finger has a separate name, the three-fingers are all part of the same hand – the Godhead. The Jewish faith is unfalteringly monotheistic (belief in one God), so the concept of Christ Jesus the Son is blasphemous to them. The Book of Genesis is the first book in the Holy Bible and is the first book in what Judaism calls the Pentateuch, which refers to the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). Within the pages of Genesis there are three different verses that refer to God by using the pronouns of “us” and “we”. Both words refer to two or more. That said, in his commentary on Genesis, Jewish Commentator Dennis Prager conveniently explained-away (or ignored) these plural pronouns of “us” and “we” that are written in Genesis 1:26, 3:22, and 11:7 [©2019 by Dennis Prager, The Rational Bible Genesis, published by Regeneray Faith. Pages 24-25, 59, & 150].
-  Wrong teachings: We should be on-guard against wrong teachings. We do well to remember the praise recorded in Acts 17:11: “*Now the Bereans were of more noble character than the Thessalonians, for they received the message with great eagerness and examined the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true.*” The Bereans verified Paul’s preaching against the foundation of Scripture and found Paul’s teachings to be in harmony with what we now call the Old Testament. We, too, should verify sermons, teachings, and even these StudySheets against Scripture. The Holy Bible must be our rock, our foundation of Biblical knowledge that describes: His character, His desire for all humanity, His [agapé love](#) for all, and His abhorrence of sin. By the way, sin is the barrier between God and humankind; Jesus destroys that barrier for those who believe in His saving grace – Jesus died for you, and for me. Praise God!!! Praise Jesus!!!
-  StudySheet questions: These StudySheets (lessons) are self-contained with Scripture (using text primarily from the New International Version — NIV, 1984) and commentary that will provide you, the Bible Study student, with thought-provoking questions, and guidance to answers. These StudySheets may be used by those new to a Bible study or long-time students; while some questions may seem elementary, they serve to provide those, who are new to Bible studies, with a foundation as all students move toward the more consequential questions.
-  “Christian” label: a Biblical student may notice that these StudySheets refer to a follower of Christ Jesus as a “Believer,” thereby avoiding the “Christian” label. In our world today, Satan has poisoned the label “Christian” to such an extent that it is safest to refer to a follower of Christ Jesus as a Believer. If a student examines the writings, the actions, the speech, of many people today who declare themselves “I am a Christian!”, the student should be stunned by the judgment, the hate, the vitriol, the lack of empathy, the uncaring attitudes, and the plain, old evil actions of these so-called “Christians”. Jesus wants Believers to minister to unbelievers so that they will come to Him in faith. These so-called “Christians” will cause many unbelievers, with whom they come in contact through face-to-face or media encounters, to turn-away from Christ Jesus in confusion and disgust at their outright hypocrisy, saying “If that is Jesus, I want nothing to do with Him!” For me, I am a Believer in the saving grace of my Savior Christ Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of the living God!

Lesson 1: Colossians 1:1-14

Introduction To Colossians

The *Life Application Study Bible* (NIV) provides these observations: “Colossians is a book of connections. Writing from prison in Rome, Paul combatted false teachings, which had infiltrated the Colossian church. The problem was “syncretism,” combining ideas from other philosophies and religions (such as paganism, strains of Judaism, and Greek thought) with Christian truth. The resulting heresy later became known as “Gnosticism,” emphasizing special knowledge (gnosis in Greek) and denying Christ as God and Savior. To combat this devious error, Paul stressed Christ’s deity — His connection with the Father — and His sacrificial death on the cross for sin. Only by being connected with Christ through faith can anyone have eternal life and only through a continuing connection with Him can anyone have power for living. Christ is God incarnate and the *only* way to forgiveness and peace with God the Father. Paul also emphasized Believers’ connections with each other as Christ’s body on earth.” [©1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, The Life Application® Bible, published by Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, IL 60189. All rights reserved. Page 2156]

The *Zondervan NASB Study Bible* provides the following insights: “[The Apostle] Paul never explicitly describes the false teaching he opposes in the Colossian letter. The nature of the heresy must be inferred from statements he made in opposition to the false teachers. An analysis of his refutation suggests that the heresy was diverse in nature. Some of the elements of its teachings were:

- (1) Ceremonialism: it held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious festivals (2:16-17), and circumcision (2:11, 3:11).
- (2) Asceticism: “Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!” (2:21; cf. 2:23).
- (3) Angel worship (2:18).
- (4) Depreciation of Christ: This is implied in Paul’s stress on the supremacy of Christ (1:15-20, 2:2-3, 2:9).
- (5) Secret knowledge: The Gnostics boasted of this (see 2:18 and Paul’s emphasis in 2:2-3 on Christ, “*in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom [and knowledge]*”).
- (6) Reliance on human wisdom and tradition (2:4, 2:8).

“These elements seem to fall into two categories, Jewish and Gnostic. It is likely, therefore, that the Colossian heresy was a mixture of an extreme form of Judaism and early state of Gnosticism. . .” [©1991, *The Zondervan NASB Study Bible*, published by Zondervan, Inc., Grand Rapids, MI 49530. All rights reserved. Page 1738]

 One last observation before we ‘dive in’ to Paul’s Letter to the Colossians. This letter is packed with truths. While it is only four chapters long, it contains arguments and rationale to encourage and strengthen our faith; and guardrails to keep our faith-journey on the path to salvation that leads through the “*narrow gate*” [Matthew 7:13]. This Letter is incredibly rich in thought and teachings! Enjoy the journey!

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Day 2

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, ²To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse [Cō-loss-ē]: Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

Q1. Who are the authors of this letter?

Q2. Is this letter written to Believers, or non-believers, in Colossae?

Q3. Why is it important for us to recognize the audience — the people Paul wanted to read this letter? (Hint: are we to treat Believers and non-believers the same?)



Location of Colosse (Colossae)

https://www.good4joy.org/wiki/images/8/8e/Paul_map_colossae.png

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There is no evidence that Paul ever visited Colossae, even though he spent about three years ministering in Ephesus, which was about 120-miles west of Colossae. He wrote this letter to the Colossians, along with the Letters of Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon during his first imprisonment in Rome. Scholars estimate that the Letter to the Colossians was written about 60 A.D. (See Acts 28.)

Scholars speculate that Epaphras (Colossians 1:7-8 ↓; 4:12-13 ↓) informed Paul of the bad theology plaguing the Colossian Church. This conversation provided motivation to Paul to write this letter and, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, shape the content of this Letter.

Colossians 1:7-8 [NIV-1984]

⁷ You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸ and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Colossians 4:12-13 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

¹² Epaphras also greets you. He is a servant of Jesus Christ. And he is from your group. He always prays for you. He prays that you will grow to be spiritually mature and have everything that God wants for you. ¹³ I know that he has worked hard for you and the people in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.



Map depicts topography of the Ephesus/Colossae region

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Lesson 1: Colossians 1:1-14



Map illustrates the relative locations of the Seven Churches listed in the Book of Revelation (see Revelation 1:11 ↓ and chapters 2-3) and also Colossae, which is just off of the map to the east.
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Revelation 1:11 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

[In the Book of Revelation, the Apostle John, who is imprisoned by the Roman government on the Island of Patmos (see map ↑), is directed to send the Book (of Revelation) to the seven churches, one of which is located in Laodicea; and Colossae is about 10-miles south-east of Laodicea on the Lycus River Valley Road.]

The voice said [to the Apostle John], “Write what you see and send that book to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”



In this letter to the Church at Colossae (see Colossians 4:16 ↓), Paul asked the Colossians to initiate a letter exchange with the Laodiceans and to share this letter with them. Presumably, the Church at Colossae had many of the same traits, foibles, influences, and evils as the Church at Laodicea due to its proximity to, and influences from, the surrounding ingrained, pagan idol-worship; the Judaizers, who taught that salvation came from following Jewish law, plus Jesus; and others — Gnostics, who promoted a blend of Judaism, worldly thought, secret knowledge, and tradition while minimizing salvation through the saving grace of Christ Jesus.

It should be noted that Paul's reference to the letter to the Laodicean church in Colossians 4:16 (↓) has been a source of debate among scholars and commentators for some time: Paul's Letter to the Laodicean Church was either (1) lost or (2) Paul's Letter to the Ephesians was intended for (or to be shared with) the Laodicean and Colossian Churches (Source: Commentator Joseph Benson, [©about 1800, Commentary of the Old and New Testaments by Joseph Benson. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/colossians/4-16.htm>]).

Colossians 4:16 [NIV-1984]

After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

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Day 3

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

We Thank God for You, and Pray For You

³We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, ⁴because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints — ⁵the 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 ^{6a}that has come to you.

Q4. Who are the “saints”?

Q5. How would you feel if your pastor or elder said to you that they “thank God . . . when we pray for you”?

 The Commentator Alexander MacLaren wrote an essay about the labels: disciples, saints, brethren (brothers and sisters), faithful, Believers, and Christians. A part of that essay is reproduced herein:

“ ‘The disciples were called Christians first in Antioch,’ says the Acts of the Apostles [Acts 11:26]. It was a name given by outsiders, and like most of the instances where a sect, or school, or party is labelled with the name of its founder, it was given in scorn. It hit and yet missed its mark. The early believers were Christians, that is, Christ’s men, but they were not merely a group of followers of a man, like many other groups of whom the [Roman] Empire at that time was full. So, they never used that name themselves. It occurs twice only in Scripture, once when King Agrippa was immensely amused at the audacity of Paul in thinking that he would easily make ‘a Christian’ of him; and once when Peter speaks of ‘suffering as a Christian,’ where he is evidently quoting, as it were, the indictment on which the early believers were tried and punished. What did they call themselves then?

“I have chosen this text not for the purpose of speaking about it only, but because it gathers together in brief compass the three principal designations by which the early believers knew themselves. [1] ‘Saints’ — that tells their relation to God, as well as their character, for it means ‘consecrated,’ set apart for Him, and therefore pure; [2] ‘faithful’ — that means ‘full of faith’ and is substantially equivalent to the usual ‘believers,’ which defines their relation to Jesus Christ as the Revealer of God; [3] ‘brethren’ — that defines their relation and sentiment towards their fellows. These terms go a great deal deeper than the nickname which the wits of Antioch invented. The members of the Church were not content with the vague ‘Christian,’ but they called themselves ‘saints,’ ‘believers,’ ‘brethren.’ One designation does not appear here, which we must take into account for completeness: [4] the earliest of all — disciples.

“Now, I purpose to bring together these four names, by which the early believers thought and spoke of themselves, in order to point the lessons as to our position and our duty, which are wrapped up in them. And I may just say that, perhaps, it is no sign of advance that the Church, as years rolled on, accepted the world’s name for itself,

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and that people found it easier to call themselves ‘Christians’ — which did not mean very much — than to call themselves ‘saints’ or ‘believers.’” [©1904; *Expositions Of Holy Scripture*, Alexander MacLaren. Text Courtesy of BibleSupport.com. <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/colossians/1-1.htm>]

^{6b} All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. ⁷ You learned it from Epaphras [Ĕ-pă-frăhs], our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, ⁸ and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

Q6. What does the phrase “this gospel is bearing fruit and growing” mean?

Q7. How do you describe “God's grace in all its truth”?

Q8. How did the Colossians hear of the Gospel of Christ Jesus?

Q9. List the names of people who are close to you. Your spouse? Children? Sister? Brother? Mom? Dad? Co-workers? Friends? Relatives? Niece? Nephew? Girlfriend? Boyfriend?

Q10. Do the people you named in the previous question know about the Gospel of Christ Jesus?
Do they know that you are a Believer in the saving grace of Christ Jesus?

Know about the Gospel? Yes? No? Why? Or why not?

Know that you are a Believer? Yes? No? Why? Or why not?

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Proverbs 22:6 [International Children's Bible (ICB)]

Train a child how to live the right way. Then even when he is old, he will still live that way.

Romans 10:8-10 [NIV-1984]

⁸ But what does it say? "The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: ⁹ That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

Day 4



Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

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.

Q11. Is prayer important to Paul? Why? Or why not?

Q12. [Personal] Is prayer important to you? Why? Or why not?

Yes? } Why?
No? }

Q13. For those who are close to you (see Question 9 ↑) could you incorporate verse 9 into your prayers for them? How?

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Day 5

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

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, ¹¹ being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully ¹² giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light.

Q14. Why might it be important for us, who believe, to “live a life worthy of the Lord and [to] please Him in every way”?

Is it important? Yes? No? Why?

 wor·thy (wûr'thē)

adj. wor·thi·er, wor·thi·est

1. Having worth, merit, or value: *a worthy cause*.

2. Honorable; admirable: *a worthy person*.

3. Having sufficient worth; deserving: *worthy to be revered; worthy of acclaim*.

[American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, Fifth Edition. Copyright © 2016 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. Published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company. All rights reserved. <https://www.thefreedictionary.com/worthy>]

Q15. How might we “bear... fruit in every good work”?

Q16. How had the Colossians “[grown]... in the knowledge of God”? How might we, who believe, “grow... in the knowledge of God”?

Colossians?

We, who believe?

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Q17. How does Paul expect the Colossians to be filled with “great endurance and patience”?

Q18. Verse 12: Consider the phrase: “the Father . . . has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints.” Let’s break it down. Are you a “saint”? What is the “inheritance”? How are we “qualified”? How do we “share” in it? What does this phrase mean to you, personally?

Are you a “saint”? Yes? No? Why? (See Ephesians 1:13-14 ↓)

What is the “inheritance”?

How are we “qualified”?

How do we “share” in it?

What does this phrase mean to you, personally?

Ephesians 1:13-14 [NIV-1984]

¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Q19. Is it important for us to “joyfully [give] thanks to the Father”? Why? Or why not?

Yes? No? Why?

1 Thessalonians 5:18 [The Message (MSG); a paraphrase]

Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.

Q20. What is the “kingdom of light”?

John 1:1-10, 14, 17 [International Children’s Bible (ICB)]

[The Gospel of John begins with profound declarations attesting to the identity and character of Christ Jesus: the Word, the Son of God, the Light of the World.]

¹ Before the world began, there was the Word. The Word was with God, and the Word was God.

² He was with God in the beginning. ³ All things were made through him. Nothing was made without him. ⁴ In him there was life. That life was light for the people of the world. ⁵ The Light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overpowered [also translated understood or overcome] the Light.

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⁶ There was a man named John [John the Baptist] who was sent by God. ⁷ He came to tell people about the Light. Through him all people could hear about the Light and believe. ⁸ John was not the Light, but he came to tell people about the Light. ⁹ The true Light was coming into the world. The true Light gives light to all.

¹⁰ The Word was in the world. The world was made through him, but the world did not know him...

¹⁴ The Word became a man and lived among us. We saw his glory — the glory that belongs to the only Son of the Father. The Word was full of grace and truth. . . .

¹⁷ The law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through **Jesus Christ**.

1 John 1:5 [NIV-1984]

This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all.

John 8:12 [NIV-1984]

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."

John 12:35-36 [NIV-1984]

³⁵ Then Jesus told them, "You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. The man who walks in the dark does not know where he is going. ³⁶ Put your trust in the light while you have it, so that you may become sons of light." When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Luke 2:28-32 [NIV-1984]

[When the baby Jesus was eight-days old, Mary and Joseph took Him to the Temple to be consecrated as their firstborn male:]

²⁵ Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Christ. . . .

²⁸ Simeon took him [the baby Jesus] in his arms and praised God, saying: ²⁹ "Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you now dismiss your servant in peace. ³⁰ For my eyes have seen your salvation, ³¹ which you have prepared in the sight of all people, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles and for glory to your people Israel."

Revelation 21:23-24^a [NIV-1984]

²³ The city [the New Jerusalem] does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. ^{24a} The nations will walk by its light

 Note: We, who believe, must always be on-guard against evil. When we have often times completed a job well done for Christ Jesus, for the Kingdom of God, our defenses frequently ebb and Satan will attack.

2 Corinthians 11:13-14 [NIV-1984]

¹³ For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. ¹⁴ And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light.

 We, who believe, must always filter what we hear and read against our knowledge of Scripture: does this new material harmonize with Scripture (Acts 17:11), or does it sound good but is unsupported by Scripture, or is it a flat-out lie. We must also remember that Satan is great at providing half-truths that sound correct, but actually perverts Scripture.

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Day 6

 Please pray for holy guidance and insight before you begin today's study.

¹³For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, ¹⁴in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

Q21. What is “the dominion of darkness”?

Q22. How did the Father (The Lord God Almighty, Jehovah) “rescue . . . us from the dominion of darkness”?

Q23. How do we know that God loves His Son?

Matthew 3:16-17 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus' baptism.]

¹⁶As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Matthew 17:5 [NIV-1984]

[Jesus' transfiguration.]

¹After six days Jesus took with him Peter, James, and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. ²There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.

³Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus. ⁴Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here. If you wish, I will put up three shelters — one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah."

⁵While he was still speaking, a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him!"

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Q24. [Verse 14] Do you believe your sins have been forgiven?

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