

**Remnant Life Church**  
October 4, 2015  
**Colossians – Introduction/Overview**  
**Colossians 1-4**

- At the turn of the first millennium a city's prominence was determined by three things – location, location, location
  - Jericho located in an oasis in the Jordan Valley the main route for north/south
  - Ninevah sat along the Tigris river with 120,000 occupants; 3 days walk in size
  - Jerusalem sits nearly in the very center of Israel - the location of the temple
- The city of Colossae (keh-lah-see), located in Asia Minor (SW Turkey) was, at one time during the Greek or Hellenistic period, a very important city because it sat on a trade route that brought a great number of people to not only pass through it but live there
- By the time of Paul, during the Roman period, the cities of Laodicea and Hierapolis had become more important in economic importance and influence
  - Laodicea is also mentioned again in **Rev. 3:16** as the rich but lukewarm church that God will spit out His mouth
  - Also the great verse of promise in **Rev. 3:20** - *Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*
  - Paul had also written a letter to the church there (**4:16**)
- At the time Paul was in ministry he was focusing the majority of his work in the region of Ephesus about 100 miles west of Colossae; spent 3 years there
- Colossae is not mentioned in the book of Acts which contains the most detailed account of Paul's travels
- So as far as we know Paul was never in Colossae (**2:1**) – how then did the church get started?
  - **Col 1:7-8** tells us that Epaphras was instrumental in starting the church (perhaps with Archippus now leading (**4:17**)) and reporting to Paul how they were doing
  - Most likely that Epaphras was saved under Paul's teaching while in Ephesus and returned to his home and started the church
  - It was probably one of his reports that prompted Paul to write the letter
- Another key leader was a man by the name of Philemon
  - The church very likely met in his home since...
  - **Col 4:9** also introduces us to Onesemus who the letter to Philemon concerns and Paul's request that he be welcomed back home as a runaway slave
- This letter is the 7<sup>th</sup> of Paul's 14 writings; this one written with Timothy (1:1)
- Written in the early 60's AD while Paul was under house arrest in Rome which is why this is known as one of Paul's 4 prison epistles. (Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians and Philemon)
- Only 95 verses but they all proclaim one central theme – Jesus!

Why did Paul write this letter?

- The church was having problems

- Just like churches do today
- Why? Because there are people in churches
- Paul addresses the problems the church is having and we can still learn today from the solutions that Paul offers nearly 2000 years ago

There are 3 central themes to the letter:

- I. Chapter 1 tells us that Jesus is supreme to everything else
  - He is the Head of Creation – everything started with Him
  - There is nothing greater and because of Christ's greatness Paul gives his life to spread the good news (or Gospel)
- II. Chapter 2 tells us that our salvation is in Jesus alone
  - Like today there were many teachings back then that circulated regarding what was necessary to be saved
  - We should not get caught up in various philosophies, mystical teachings or anything that is added to or alters God's Word
  - Don't get your heart and mind to focus on anything else but Jesus
  - Nothing else is worthy of your worship and praise
- III. Chapters 3 and 4 tells that we have been saved to serve
  - Serve God
  - Serve one another
    - Our family
    - Our co-workers
    - In the church
    - Outside the church – everywhere we live
  - The Bible is a manual for our lives.
  - If we follow it we will be able to live a life that is at peace and complete in Him.
  - Did not say we would be without struggles and trials **but** we can still be at peace even in the midst of them.
  - Next week – begin an exegetical examination of the content of Colossians and how we can grow and strengthen our walk with God through Paul's letter