

Colossians: Jesus The Messiah: Nothing More, Nothing Less

Study 1: Overview: The Jesus Test

1. **Read the whole of Colossians. In one or two sentences, summarise Paul's main message to the Colossians as you understand it.**

Background

Questions 2 to 5 might require a little research and are included for those who want to dig a bit deeper. Otherwise, jump to question "The Purpose Of The Letter".

2. **What do we know about Colossae and what is significant in understanding this letter?**
3. **What was Paul's relationship with the Colossians? (See Col 2:1)**
4. **Compare Colossians 1:6-8; 4:12-13 and Philemon 1:23. What do they tell us about Epaphras?**
5. **What can we learn about Tychicus from the following passages: Acts 20:4-5; Ephesians 6:21-22; Colossians 4:7-9; 2 Timothy 4:12; Titus 3:12?**

There seems to be a close connection between the letters to the Ephesians and the Colossians, as well as Philemon.

- Philemon probably lived in Colossae. Compare Phil 1:2 and Col 4:17.
- Philemon's slave, Onesimus, came from Colossae (Col 4:9). Early Christian writings confirmed this.
- Tychicus is mentioned as Paul's messenger to Colossae and Ephesus but also as travelling with Onesimus. He maybe delivered all three letters at once.

Purpose Of The Letter

Why did Paul write to the Colossians? The clues are contained in the letter itself. Look at the following verses. What does each one tell you?

6. Colossians 2:4

7. Colossians 2:8

8. Colossians 2:16

9. Colossians 2:18

10. Colossians 2:20

11. Summarises the teachings you see putting pressure on the Colossians church.

Paul's Response

12. Scan this letter again. Note how many times Paul refers directly to Jesus. What does that tell you about the danger of these teachings?

13. What does it tell you about the antidote to these teachings?

For us

14. What contemporary views promote legalism (strict rules) or suggest that truly religious people have mystical spiritual experiences or that true spirituality lies in denying ourselves any pleasure?

15. Do those views emphasise Jesus (who He is and what He has done for us) or tend to take the focus off Him? Can you illustrate that?

16. In what ways has Western society pushed Jesus aside?

17. What do you think of the suggestion that there are two tests we can apply:

- Does this teaching, or worldview, magnify Jesus or diminish Him?
- If this teaching, or worldview, is true, why did Jesus need to die on the Cross?

18. What beliefs or actions in your own life tends to push Jesus to one side rather than being central?