

# THE PREEMINENCE OF CHRIST

## The Fullness of Deity Dwelling in Christ

### *Holy and Faithful*

Colossians 1: 1-2

**Introduction:** Every letter has a greeting. In the first century world that greeting identified the writer(s) and may have offered credentials, if appropriate. It also included the person(s) to whom it was addressed and may include words of blessing and some hint at the letter's purpose. For Paul, these greetings are sacred opportunities to recognize his audience, to speak truth about them in Christ, and to set the tone of his message.

#### I. An Apostle by the Will of God

- A. Even though Paul is known by the Colossian believers, he has never been there personally, and it is important for him to remind them of his credentials before he sets out to correct false teaching.
- B. We are reminded that apostleship is not an office one chooses, but to which one is divinely called (See Eph. 4:11 re: apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastor-teachers)
- C. There are two authors involved in writing this letter, but at this time only Paul is recognized as a called apostle.

#### II. To the Saints at Colossae

- A. It is important to know and to be reminded who we are: saints—a called out people, consecrated unto God, set apart for His purposes.
- B. With consecration by the Holy Spirit also comes transformation. Vessels wholly dedicated unto God cannot be put to mundane use. We are bought with a price and sprinkled with the Blood and made holy unto the Lord.
- C. We are holy, or sanctified, by God's doing. This is His work and is conferred upon us by the power of the Holy Spirit in the new birth as He occupies His Holy Temple (our body).

#### III. To the Faithful Adelphoi (brothers and sisters) at Colossae

- A. While "saints" is a designation that is true because of something God has done for us and in us, "faithful" is our response. "Saints" is true of every truly born again believer; "faithful" is only true of those who hold fast and devoted to Jesus Christ.
- B. Paul is already preparing for his defense of the Person of Christ in the use of this phrase, and setting a polemical tone: I am addressing the faithful, some of you may not be in that company!
- C. Faithfulness is not a work, per se, but a steadfast devotion to Jesus Christ that is an act of our will, a choice we make, and which God empowers by His Holy Spirit for those who choose the path of obedience.

**Conc:** Are you one who is consecrated to God...are you born again and indwelt by the Holy Spirit? Are you a faithful follower of Jesus Christ? Are you available to Him for whatever purpose He has for your life? Do you find yourself in the greeting to the Colossians?

*Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, <sup>2</sup> To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father. <sup>3</sup> We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, <sup>4</sup> since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup> because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel <sup>6</sup> which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you heard of it and understood the grace of God in truth; <sup>7</sup> just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, <sup>8</sup> and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.*

Colossians 1: 1-8  
(NASB)

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- 1.) As one surveys the first part of Apostle Paul's letter to the Colossians (and for that matter, the whole of Paul's writings to the church), who is it that are called to be the Lord's witnesses throughout the world?
- 2.) In Ephesians chapter four we are told that God has given something very specific to the church for a special purpose. What is it that God has given and what is the purpose? How does that apply to each one of use individually? Explain.
- 3.) As true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, who are we anyway? Do specific terms come to mind that aptly describe what it is that God expects from us? (See Ephesians 6: 20) What does that mean with respect to the way we live our daily lives as Christians?
- 4.) The term "saint" is often misinterpreted or misunderstood as it relates to one who is a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Based on what you learned from this sermon, what is your understanding of the word, and what impact should it have on the way you lead your life day by day?
- 5.) Paul's salutation to the church addresses "the saints and faithful brothers" (i.e., "holy and faithful brothers" in the NIV). Were there those within the church who might have been considered as "unfaithful?" If so, who (as you recall some of the problems mentioned in our pastor's previous sermon), might they have been and what were some of the philosophies to which they might have professed? Does any of this have applicability to the church today?
- 6.) Are you a saint and faithful brother or sister of the Lord Jesus Christ? Share with your small group what this description means to you personally.

## NOTES

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