

Colossians - Guarding Against Deception



- Have you had the Jehovah's Witness or the Mormons knock at your door? Have you met someone who is involved in Scientology, Unitarianism, Wicca, Hare Krishna, Baha'i, the Unification Church (called the Moonies), or Christian Science?
- Have you ever wondered about the differences between Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Confucianism, Judaism, Roman Catholicism, Liberal Protestantism, and Evangelical Protestantism, and why there are so many different religions?

There is a battle for the hearts and minds of people today. It started at the fall in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3). It is a battle between good and evil, truth and error, love and hate, liberty and bondage, life and death, God and His kingdom, and Satan and his evil spirits (Mark 4:15; Acts 26:18; Rev. 12:9). The primary weapon that Satan uses is **deception**! He uses many other weapons—temptation, accusations, etc., but **deception** is his primary weapon. This is why Jesus said the devil is *“the father of lies”* (John 8:44).

The **mission** of the evil one and his forces is to **deceive, distract, and divert**. Their mission is to get people to believe anything but the Gospel, to get people to trust anything but Jesus Christ as their Savior and Redeemer, to get people to worship anyone or anything other than God Almighty, to get people reading anything but the Holy Bible, to get people talking about anything just as long as it is not praying to God, to get people going anywhere as long as it is not to church, and to get people spending their time on anything but serving God and proclaiming the Gospel.

Background: The City of Colossae was filled with pagan religions, cults, and superstitions. They lived in fear of spirits, demons, and departed ghosts of their departed ancestors. Their forms of worship included whipping themselves and self-mutilation. They believed it would ward off evil spirits and human curses. They lived in continuous paranoia. Many of these superstitions and cultic beliefs infiltrated the church at Colossae, including Gnosticism and Jewish legalism.

Paul's letter was written to combat deception and false beliefs. Paul combated the error by magnifying the truth. He exposed the counterfeit by presenting the genuine. He countered a polluted gospel by presenting the true identity, accomplishments, and true gospel of Jesus Christ. **What a particular group teaches about Jesus Christ is the primary key for determining whether they are true or false** (see 1 John 4:1-3). In short, we need to intimately know both our Bible and our Savior.

Central Lesson:

Knowing our **BIBLE** and our **SAVIOR** is the best protection against deception.

Author: The book identifies the Apostle **PAUL** as the author (1:1, 23; 4:18). The style and content are similar to Ephesians written at the same time.

Date: Colossians was written about A.D. **60** from Rome while Paul was in prison. Philippians is among a group of letters called “Prison Epistles” because it was written while Paul was in a Roman jail around A.D. 60-62 for preaching the Gospel. The Prison Epistles are Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Title: The book is named after the recipients—Christians living in the city of **COLOSSE** which is now western Turkey. The church was founded by Epaphras (1:7) who is mentioned in some of Paul's other epistles. He heard the gospel, shared it with others in Colosse, and a church was formed. It was a church of Gentile Christians. Philemon was a member.

Key Verse: Colossians 2:8. *“Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.”*

Key Chapter: Chapter **2**. Paul warns the Colossians about the danger of deception, reminds them of who Jesus is, and urges them to stand firm in the teaching about Christ that they originally heard and received.

Key Words: **DECEPTION** or deceive (2:4, 8). Also, **Knowledge** (1:9-10; 2:3; 3:10). Paul does not use the normal Greek word for knowledge but a word that means “deep knowledge.” The false teachers were claiming that they had a deep knowledge that the Colossians were missing. Paul wrote that the true **“deep knowledge” is found in Christ**. Beware of groups or individuals that convey elitism, superiority, and snobbery.

Outline: My suggested outline:

- I. **BELIEVING** the Truth (Chapters 1-2).
- II. **LIVING** the Truth (Chapters 3-4).

Examples of World Views:

- **Moral Relativism** - There are no absolutes, no set right or wrong.
- **Naturalism** - Rejection of God (Atheism), only the physical world exists.
- **Agnosticism** - (Greek: “a” means “no” and “gnosis” means “knowledge”). If God exists, there is no way to know for certain.
- **Pantheism** - (Greek: “pan” means “all” and “theos” means “God”). God is an impersonal force that is everywhere - “the force” of Star Wars, and Buddhism.
- **Deism** - God created the universe & set it in motion then disappeared.
- **Today's Major questions** - Does a higher power exist? Why is there evil? Can all religions be right? Who is Jesus? Is the Bible true? What is truth? Do I have a purpose for existing?

Summary of Paul's View of Jesus in Colossians: Jesus is our redeemer and forgiver of our sins (1:13-14), the image of the invisible God and heir over all creation (1:15), the Creator of the universe (1:16), an eternal being and the sustainer of the universe (1:17), the head of the church, (1:18), the fullness of God in bodily form (1:19; 2:9), the reconciler by His shed blood (1:20).

Central Lesson:

Knowing our Bible and our Savior is the best protection against deception. Are you growing in your knowledge of the scriptures? Are you growing in your relationship with Jesus Christ?

- ▶ Accept Christ as your Savior. ▶ As a Christian, dedicate your life to Christ. ▶ Invite someone to next Sunday's study. ▶ Attend a small group. ▶ Read the Bible this week. ▶ Pray for friends that need Jesus.