

Handout 1: **THE LIFE OF PAUL: “Apostle to the Goyim (Gentiles)”**

<u>EVENT</u>	<u>Year AD</u> (all dates are approximate)
Born at Tarsus (modern Turkey) sometime between 7 and 12 AD of Jewish parents who are Roman citizens and traced their ancestry to the tribe of Benjamin (Rom 11:1; Phil 3:5)	10?
Arrival in Jerusalem to study with Gamaliel (Acts 22:3)	30
Sent as an officer of the Sanhedrin to arrest Christians in Damascus & conversion (Acts 9; 22:6-16; 26:12-18)	36
Three-year sojourn in Arabia and mission to Damascus (Gal 1:17)	36-39
Visit to Jerusalem (Gal 1:18)	39
Sojourn in Tarsus (Acts 9:30)	?
Arrival in Antioch, Syria to serve the Christian community (Acts 11:25)	43-44
1 <sup>st</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 13-14) -Cyprus -Roman Province of south Galatia (Antioch Pisidia) -Lycaonia (Iconium, Lystra)	45-49
Visit to Jerusalem for the Council of the Jerusalem (Acts 15)	49/50
2 <sup>nd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 15:36-18:21): -at Athens & Corinth (Greece); meets Roman governor Gallio* -wrote 1 & 2 Thessalonians	50-52 50?52 51-52
3 <sup>rd</sup> Missionary Journey (Acts 18:23-21:14) -visited Phrygia & Galatia -at Ephesus (Turkey) -wrote 1 Corinthians -mission to Macedonia -wrote 2 Corinthians -at Corinth (Greece) -wrote letter to the Romans	53-58 53 54-57 54 57 57?58 57-58 57/58
Return to Jerusalem (Acts 21:15-23:22)	Spring of 58
*Roman Governor Felix and two-year imprisonment at Caesarea. Hearing with Governor Festus at Caesarea = sent to Rome (Acts 24-25)	58-60
4 <sup>th</sup> Journey: Voyage to Rome & shipwreck off the coast of Malta (Acts 27)	60?61
Paul imprisoned in Rome (Acts 28) -wrote letters to the churches at Ephesus, Philippi, possibly to Philemon, and Colossus*	61-63
Voyage to the east and the west (Spain? Voyage to Britain?) letters 1 Timothy & Titus	63-67
Final Roman captivity: 2 Timothy letter	67
Martyrdom by beheading	67

\*Paul may have written his letters to Philemon and Colossus from Ephesus in c. 57 AD

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The consistency of Paul's Christology reflected in three passages from his letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Hebrews:

St. Paul's Great Christological Passages			
Topic	Philippians 2:6-11	Colossians 1:15-22; 2 :6-15	Hebrews 1:2-18
Jesus' divine relationship to God the Father	Form of God (Phil 2:6)	Image of the invisible God (Col 1:15, 19)	Revelation of God (Heb 1:2)
	Equality with God (Phil 2:6)	Status of Firstborn (Col 1:15, 18)	Status of Firstborn (Heb 1:6)
	Slave of God (Phil 2:7)	Son of God (Col 1:13)	Son of God (Heb 1:2a, 5, 8)
Jesus' divine work:			
In creation		All things created (Col 1:16-18)	Created universe (Heb 1:2, 3, 10, 12)
In salvation	Suffering for our salvation (Phil 2:8)	Reconciling all things (Col 1:19-22; 2:6, 13-15)	Sustains all things that exist by His word (Heb 1:3; 2:10, 11)
Jesus' Divine Nature	Christ is <i>Theos</i> /God (Phil 2:6, 11)	<i>Theotetos</i> /Godhead (Col 2:9)	<i>Theos</i> /God (Heb 1:8)
Exclusively God	Christ is Lord (Phil 2:11)	Fullness of the deity (Col 1:19; 2:9)	Created the universe (Heb 1:1-12)
In the flesh	Coming in human likeness (Phil 2:7, 8)	Of the deity bodily (Col 2:9)	Blood and flesh (Heb 1:6; 2:14-18)
Pre-existence		Created all things/before all things (Col 1:16-17)	At the beginning made the earth; your years will have no end (Heb 1:10-13)

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Compare these passages with the Christological passages in the Gospel of John: 1:1-3, 12, 13-14, 18; 3:16; 14:6-7, 18.

## Handout 2: Colossians Lesson 1

*Holy indeed are all Paul's letters. But those he writes behind bars are especially advantageous for the reader. Those include, for instance, the letters to the Ephesians and Philemon, that to Timothy, that to the Philippians and the one before us. For Colossians was written while Paul was imprisoned, since he writes in it: "for which I am also in bonds; that I may make it manifest as I ought to speak."*

St. John Chrysostom, *Homilies on Colossians I*

While all the Fathers of the Church accept Paul as the author of the Letter to the Colossians, not all modern Biblical scholars agree. However, most modern scholars, in agreement with the Church Fathers, accept Paul as the writer of the Letter to Philemon which has many links to the Letter to the Colossians:

1. Both letters are sent by Paul and Timothy together (Phlm verse 1; Col 1:1).
2. Both letters mention Paul is writing from his imprisonment (Phlm verses 1 and 13; Col 4:3, 10, 18).
3. Both letters mention the same group of Christian friends (Phlm verses 23-24; Col 4:10-14).
4. Both letters mention Onesimus, the runaway slave who has become a Christian (Phlm verse 10; Col 4:9).

Therefore, the evidence connecting both letters and the weight of Christian tradition makes a compelling defense for Paul as the writer of the Letter to the Colossians.

### SUMMARY OF ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO THE COLOSSIANS

Biblical Period	#12 The Kingdom of the Church			
Covenant	The New Covenant in Christ Jesus			
Focus	Supremacy of Christ in His Church		Submission to Christ in His Church	
Scripture	1:1-----1:15-----3:1-----4:7-----4:18			
Division	Address	Preeminence of Christ	The Ideal Christian Life	Conclusion
Topic	Preeminence of Christ in Creation, Redemption, and in the Church		Practice of the Believer	
	Freedom in Christ		Living in Holiness	
Location	Possibly from prison in Caesarea Possibly from prison in Ephesus Possibly from house-arrest in Rome 61/63 AD			
Time	Probably c. 57 AD from Ephesus, or c. 58-60 AD from Caesarea, or c. 61-63 AD from Rome			
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The first part of Paul's letter is an exposition of Christ's supremacy over all creation (Chapters 1:15-2:23). The second part explains what Christ's supremacy means in terms of the Christian's submission to Christ as Lord and Savior and as a citizen of His Kingdom that is the Church (Chapters 3:1-4:6).

The divisions of Paul's Letter:

- I. Address (1:1-14)
- II. The Preeminence of Christ: His Person and His Work (1:15-2:29)
- III. The Ideal Christian Life (3:1-4:6)
- IV. Conclusion (4:7-18)

Paul's Letter to the Colossians is the most Christological of all Paul's letters. The predominant theme his letter is the preeminence and sufficiency of Christ in all and through all in the life of the Christian. Paul uses Christos/Messiah twenty-five times in the letter (Col 1:1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 24, 27, 28; 2:2, 5, 6, 8, 11, 17, 20; 3:1 twice, 3, 4, 11, 15, 16, 24; 4:3, 12). Paul teaches that every Christian is made complete in Jesus as God intended for that person from the moment of his/her conception. The redeemed Christian lacks nothing to prepare him/her for the Kingdom of Heaven because "in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily (Col 2:9).

*1:26-27; 2:2b-3: 26 the mystery hidden from ages and from generations past. But now it has been manifested to his holy ones, 27 to whom God chose to make known the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; it is Christ in you, the hope for glory ... 2:2b for the knowledge of the mystery of God, Christ, 3 in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*

In preaching the word of God, Paul is carrying out the mystery of God's Divine Plan for humanity that was not revealed in past ages and generations but is now revealed to make Christ known as God to the Gentiles. Jesus spoke of the "mystery of the kingdom" as an understanding granted by divine authority to the Apostles (Mt 13:11; Mk 4:11 and Lk 8:10). Paul also wrote about the "mystery" of God in Romans 11:25; 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 2:7; 15:51; Ephesians 1:9; 3:3, 4, 9; 5:32; 6:19; Colossians 2:2; 4:3 and 1 Timothy 3:9, 19.

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