

# ALL ABOUT CHRIST

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COLOSSIANS

# WELCOME

Hello!

We are so happy that you have decided to join us for the book of Colossians!

Colossians was written by Paul during his first imprisonment at a time when the church in Colossae was under attack from false teachers. Paul responds to those who falsely taught that Jesus was not the Christ, nor really God, by focussing on the glory and deity of Jesus Christ. In so doing Paul offers a strong gospel message, demonstrating that by way of the cross Jesus has reconciled all things to Himself, thereby making a way for all of humanity to enjoy right standing with God. The book of Colossians will challenge us to reflect upon the manner we are following Jesus Christ. In addition, it will challenge us to consider how we are living out the faith we profess to have - in our homes, church and the world generally.

As we unpack this book together, we will use the inductive study method. Approaching Scripture in this way will help us remember that we need to read the God's Word with the goal of identifying the main idea of a passage before considering its application to our lives.

Every week we will guide you through three steps:

- Observation
- Interpretation
- Application

The following information on the inductive study method was adapted from (A Beginner's Guide to Inductive Bible Study by Amy Allender/Sep 23, 2018.)

## 1. OBSERVATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT SAY?)

1. As you read through the text ask yourself the "5 W's and H. Who? What? When? Where? Why? How.
2. Next, reread the text and look for key words. Key words are often repeated words in the text. Mark the key words using colours or in any way that makes sense to you.
3. Look for lists. If you come across a list mark it with 1, 2, 3 etc.

**Here is an example, 2 Timothy v16-17**

"All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for (1) teaching, (2) rebuking, (3) correcting and (4) training in righteousness,"

4. Look for contrasts and comparisons.

**For example, 1 Peter 5:8 shows a comparison.**

"Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour."

5. Look for expressions of time.

**For example, before, after, when, immediately, during, in the year etc...**

6. Look for terms of conclusion. These are words like therefore, thus, so and then.
7. Look for conditional statements. These are words like if and but.

## 2. INTERPRETATION (WHAT DOES THE TEXT MEAN?)

You cannot interpret the text apart from considering the context in which it was written.

As you interpret the text the following questions should be asked:

- Is my interpretation of this passage of Scripture consistent with the theme, purpose, and structure of the book in which it is found?
- Is it consistent with other Scripture about the same subject?
- Am I considering the historic and cultural context?

It is important to never take a Scripture out of its context and attempt to make it say what you want it to say. Discover what the author is saying and do not add to his meaning.

It is also key to use Scripture to interpret Scripture. All Scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16) and God is always the same (Hebrews 13:8). Therefore, Scripture will never contradict

itself. When interpreting, remember to ask yourself if what you have interpreted about this subject in the given verses fits with what is said on the subject elsewhere in the Scripture.

### 3. APPLICATION (HOW SHOULD THIS IMPACT ME?)

This step can only be accomplished after proper observation and interpretation. That is, only once you have established what the text says and what it means, can you apply truths to the way you live. Crucially, application should always also lead to transformation or change.

This workbook has been divided into 12 weeks. Each week comes with a self-study part for you to do at home. We will mostly discuss the Application questions during our discussion groups.

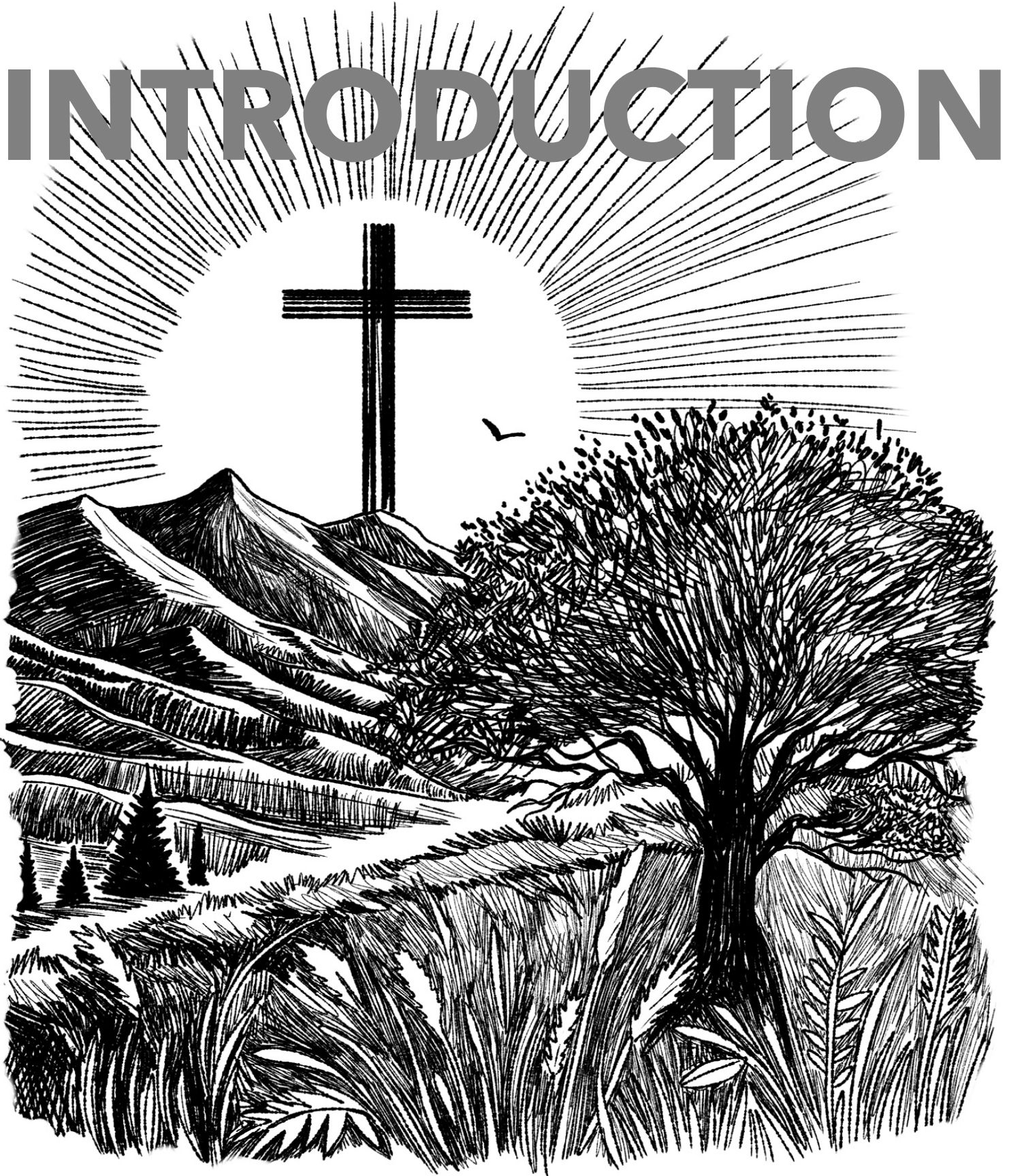
You will also find a Foundations section at the beginning of each week. The Foundations section will shed some light on biblical terms and themes for those who are new to the faith and/or new to the Bible.

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# INTRODUCTION





# **Introduction** |

## **Colossians 1:1-14**

# WEEK ONE

Before we start getting into the theological principles and application it is crucial we first understand the context for the book of Colossians. In the first fourteen verses of chapter 1 Paul offers much in the way of context. In the process, he sets a good foundation for the rest of this letter.

# FOUNDATIONS

In the Foundations section we look at terms and concepts that have come up in our text that are foundational to our faith. Those who are new to the faith or to the Bible may find this part especially helpful!

## WORDS THAT COME UP IN OUR TEXT

### Colossae

Colossians 1:2

This city was about 100 miles east of Ephesus and 12 miles away from Laodicea, in Asia Minor. Although Paul wrote a letter to the church in Colossae, it's likely one that he had not yet personally visited.

### Epaphras

Colossians 1:7

Epaphras is credited with being the believer who brought the gospel to the city of Colossae. He was a leader known for serving the Lord as well as a man of faithful ministry. He was likely with Paul as Paul was writing this letter and likely a prisoner with Paul in Rome.

## THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

### In the Spirit

Colossians 1:8

The use of "the Spirit" in this verse is important. It completes a clear picture of the Triune God that begins in verse 6 with the mention of God and then in verse 7 with the mention of Jesus. Paul presents all three persons of the Trinity together as part of God at work in our world.

## Redemption

Colossians 1:14

The word redemption means “to secure the release or recovery of persons or things by the payment of a price.” Redemption is the work of Christ on our behalf, whereby he purchases and ransoms us - at the price of his own life - securing our deliverance from the bondage and condemnation of sin. As the old hymn says, “He paid a debt he did not owe, because we owed a debt we could not pay.” Praise Him.

# INTERPRETATION

We will answer these questions together in class

1. Who wrote Colossians? What does the text say about the author?
2. When and where was the book of Colossians written?
3. What is the literary style or genre? You might also answer this by reading the beginning and ending of the book: Colossians 1:1-2 and Colossians 4:18.
4. To whom was the book of Colossians written?

5. Read Colossians 1:9-14. What is the purpose of this book. Why was Paul writing to the church in Colossae?
  
6. What are the central themes of the book? To start, look for any repeated words or phrases that occur in each of the introduction (Colossians 1:1-14) and conclusion (Colossians 4:7-18) to this letter.
  
7. Why do you think is it important that we are deeply rooted in the truth of the Gospel and don't cling to subtle counterfeits?





THE IMAGE



OF GOD



# Jesus - The Image of God

## Colossians 1:15-23

WEEK TWO

Paul gets quickly to shutting down the critics. He does so by laying out eleven aspects of Jesus that reveal who he is. Paul demonstrates that Jesus was more than just a good man or prophet, making clear that he is the image of the invisible God, the One through whom all things were created. This greatness of Jesus touches all of us in a very personal way because everything has now changed for us because of it! Paul contrasts who we used to be with who we are now - and how we ought to live in light of it.

# FOUNDATIONS

In the Foundations section we look at terms and concepts that have come up in our text that are foundational to our faith. Those who are new to the faith or to the Bible may find this part especially helpful!

## WORDS THAT COME UP IN OUR TEXT

### The invisible God

Colossians 1:15

God the Father is spirit, so he is unseen and intangible. He has no physical form or body that can be seen by human eyes.

### The Image of God

Colossians 1:15

Jesus is God in human form, the visible image of the invisible God. The unseen God became seen in the form of Jesus.

### Reconciled

Colossians 1:22

Because of our sin, we were estranged from God and hostile towards him. Through the death of Jesus Christ on the cross, our broken relationship with God has been restored. Jesus' death restored our peace with him making us holy, faultless and blameless in God's sight. To be reconciled is to move from hostility to peace with God.

## The Gospel

Colossians 1:23

The word gospel is translated euangelion in Greek with “eu” meaning good and “angelion” meaning pronouncement. Good news! God, in human form, stepped down from heaven, to live among his creation, experiencing life, emotions and relationships, all with the purpose of offering his life as a sacrifice in our place. His death brings us life, now and for all eternity.

## THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

### He is before all things

Colossians 1:17

This phrase declares Jesus' eternal existence, predating all creation and time. It highlights his divine nature and emphasizes that he is not a created being but the eternal God. In Colossae, false were denigrating the deity of Christ. Paul argued that only God existed before creation; therefore, Jesus is God.

# INTERPRETATION

These questions are preparation for the group discussions and teaching.

1. Read Colossians 1:15-23

Make a list of everything the passage teaches us about who Christ Jesus is and what he has done. Briefly describe what you think each means.

2. What does it mean that Jesus is the 'image' of the invisible God?

3. Why is the word 'reconciliation' important to Paul's message?

4. What contrasts do you see in Colossians 1:21-23?



# WHOLE BIBLE CONNECTIONS

Let's see how the rest of the Bible is connected this text

1. Read the following verses. Write down how each of these cross references add to the main ideas in our passage.

- Hebrews 1:1-4

- John 1:1-18

- Ephesians 2:1-7

- Romans 5:8-11

# APPLICATION

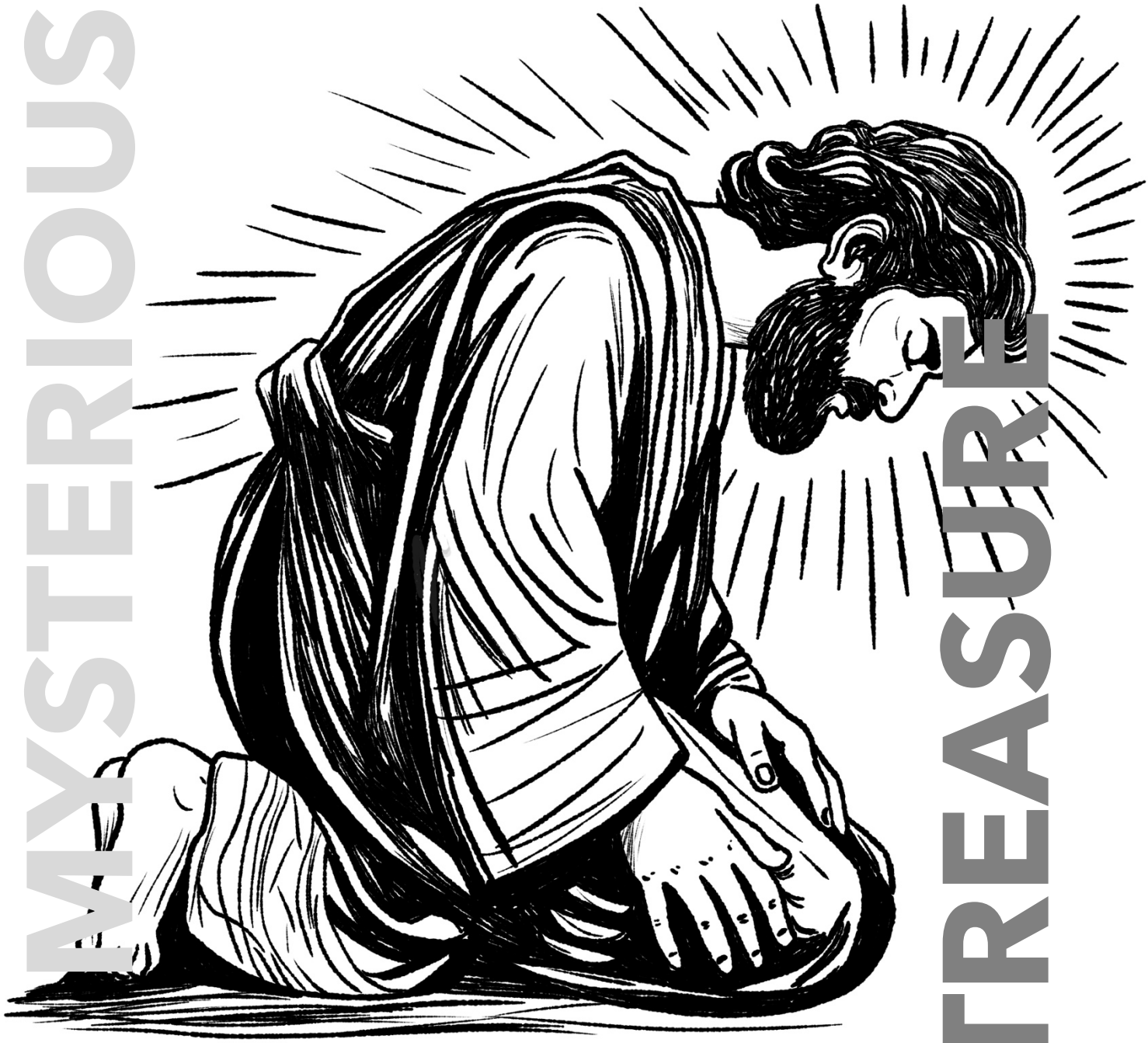
These are the questions that we will mostly be discussing in our group discussions

1. How does this passage clarify your purpose on this earth?
2. How does the truth of this passage arm you in the fight against selfishness and pride in your own heart?
3. Describe what it means for you to be reconciled to God.
4. What have you learnt about Jesus in the passage that leaves you encouraged. What has challenged you?





MYSTERIOUS



TREASURE



# Jesus - The mysterious Treasure

Colossians 1:24-2:5

Having never met the church at Colossae Paul is full of love and concern for them. He mentions five specific goals for them as a church, goals that are relevant for us as a church today. He follows these with a warning; one we would be wise to heed today. Let's take a look!

# FOUNDATIONS

In the Foundations section we look at terms and concepts that have come up in our text that are foundational to our faith. Those who are new to the faith or to the Bible may find this part especially helpful!

## WORDS THAT COME UP IN OUR TEXT

### Laodicea

Colossians 2:1

Laodicea was a city located approximately 12 miles west of Colossae. Epaphras evangelized both of these towns. The church at Laodicea, along with that in Colossae, is one that Paul had not visited in person, but was deeply concerned about. He is wrestling in the spirit for these believers as he writes to them and prays for them.

## THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

### The mystery of God

Colossians 1:26,27; 2:2

The term "mystery of God" is used in a few different ways in the New Testament and specifically here in Colossians. In 1:26, this term refers to the Church as the Body of Christ. In 1:27, "the mystery of God" is the indwelling Christ. Finally, in 2:2, the "mystery of God" is Jesus revealed as the Christ, the treasury of all wisdom and knowledge. You see, at this time, false teachers enticed the believers at Colossae with specious talk of mysteries, but the great mystery - the mystery of God's loving purpose - is disclosed in Christ alone.

# INTERPRETATION

These questions are preparation for the group discussions and teaching.

1. Read Colossians 1:24-2:5.  
Mark how many times the word 'know' or 'knowledge' is repeated in this passage.  
What are all the things that Paul wants us to 'know'?
  
2. Read Colossians 2:2-3. List the specific goals that Paul sets out for the church. Briefly describe each of these goals.
  - What is the 'mystery' Paul is talking about? Why is it a mystery?
  
3. What does Paul teach the Colossians about Jesus in this passage?

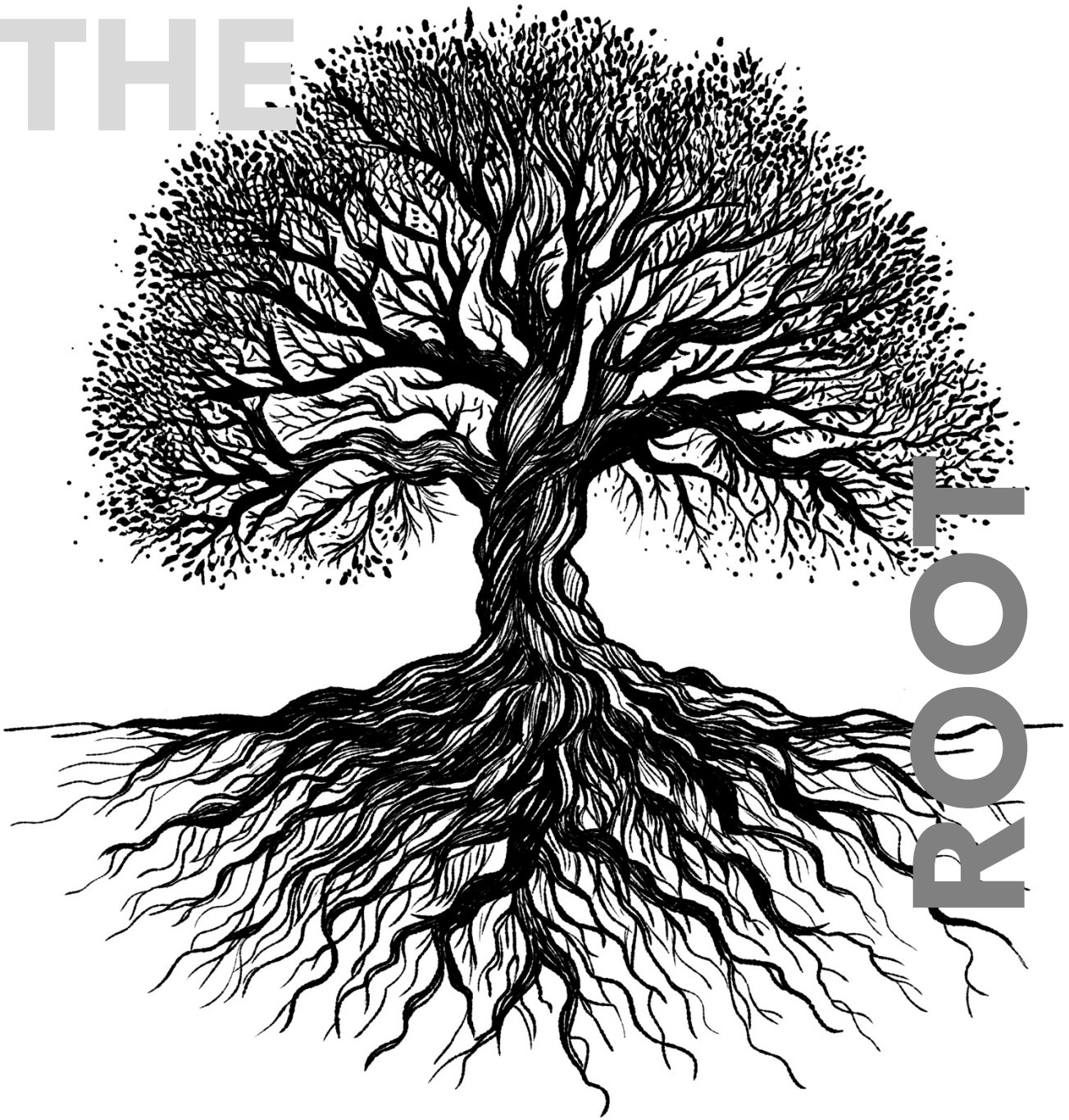








THE



ROOT



## Jesus - The Root

Colossians 2:6-23

Steadfastness is foundational to our faith. Without it we'll either be like a tree with a weak root or wrongly planted. Simply, we'll fail to stand and struggle to grow. Being rooted in the truth of the Gospel will enable us to stand firm and grow in the things of God. Without deep roots believers can easily be deceived by the work of the enemy - leading to spiritual floundering, among a host of other issues.

# FOUNDATIONS

In the Foundations section we look at terms and concepts that have come up in our text that are foundational to our faith. Those who are new to the faith or to the Bible may find this part especially helpful!

## WORDS THAT COME UP IN OUR TEXT

### Circumcision

Colossians 2:11

Physical circumcision was of utmost importance to the Jews and the term itself can refer to the entire Law. Once Jesus came, though, he became the fulfillment of the Law. Circumcision, then, is no longer a physical act, but a spiritual one. In the case of the Colossian Christians, who were Gentiles and uncircumcised, Paul reassured them that they were circumcised by “putting off the sins of the flesh.” What matters is knowing Christ, not the physical act of circumcision

### Dead in trespasses

Colossians 2:13

Before knowing Christ, the Colossians believers were dead in their sins, for “the wages of sin is death” (Romans 3:23). To be dead in sin is to be dead to the things of God with no way of becoming alive, apart from the saving work of Christ.

### Ascetic practices

Colossians 2:18

These religious practices were disciplines designed to de-emphasize the pleasures of this world with the use of strict self-denial as a means of attaining a higher spiritual plane. However, Paul warns against the practice of these as they were not required to follow Christ and could lead to a sense of false humility. Rather than following a set of rules in hopes of earning God’s favour, believers are to live under grace (Romans 6:14) and be led by the Holy Spirit.

## THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

### Being dead in Christ

Colossians 2:20

This phrase refers to the believer's spiritual union with Christ's death on the cross, where they are considered to have died to sin and the old way of life. Paul is urging the Colossian Christians to walk by faith in Christ instead of living by faith in their own ability to follow man made rules and regulations.

# INTERPRETATION

These questions are preparation for the group discussions and teaching.

Read Colossians 2:6-23.

1. Compare Colossians 1:23 with Colossians 2:6 and compare Colossians 1:19 with Colossians 2:9-10. What similar themes do you observe?
2. Describe what it means for you to be rooted in Christ.
3. Read Colossians 2:11-12. List everything Paul says about circumcision.
  - Read Genesis 17:9-14 and Ezekiel 44:6-9. Summarize what circumcision was all about.

- What point is Paul making by bringing in circumcision?
4. Read Colossians 2:13-15. What does this passage teach us about the following aspects of the gospel:
- Man
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Sin
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  - Satan
5. Read Colossians 2:16-17. What is the 'therefore' there for? What action and result are joined by it in this passage?



# WHOLE BIBLE CONNECTIONS

Let's see how the rest of the Bible is connected this text

1. Read the following cross-references. Write down any similar themes or further insight you gain into our passage.

- 1 Corinthians 15:1-4

- 2 John 6

- Psalm 1:1-3

- John 15:1-5

- Ephesians 3:14-19

-

# APPLICATION

These are the questions that we will mostly be discussing in our group discussions

1. Consider what it means for you to be rooted, established and built up in Christ. Would you describe your faith as growing or stagnant? Explain.
  - What practices and people encourage you to grow in your faith?
  - What practices and people hinder you from growing in your faith?
2. In what area of your life are you most likely to be captivated by human commands and teachings?
  - Why does Paul say that these things “can’t curb the flesh?”
  - How have you personally experienced this to be true? What would Paul say can “curb your flesh?” instead?







# WEEK FIVE

## Jesus - Above All Things

Colossians 3:1-4:1

In this chapter Paul focusses on how we are to live out our faith. His concern is how, in practical terms, we 'walk the walk'. To this end Paul produces a list for us - things to put off and things to put on. The importance of "dressing" ourselves appropriately as believers is reinforced. The entire passage begs the question, 'what does your outfit look like?'

# FOUNDATIONS

In the Foundations section we look at terms and concepts that have come up in our text that are foundational to our faith. Those who are new to the faith or to the Bible may find this part especially helpful!

## WORDS THAT COME UP IN OUR TEXT

God's chosen  
Colossians 3:12

To be God's chosen, is to be selected or elected by Him to be part of his family.

Bondservants  
Colossians 3:22; 4:1

Bondservants were considered part of a person's household, yet did not enjoy the same level of freedom as their masters. According to Paul, these servants are to show submission and obedience to their masters. Rather than teaching Christian bondservants to rebel, Paul instructed them to obey.

## THEOLOGICAL TERMS AND CONCEPTS

Hidden in Christ  
Colossians 3:3

Because believers die and are raised with Christ, the power of sin over us is broken. We are "hidden with Christ" through the work of the Holy Spirit who assures us of our eternal security. Not only that, but we step into Christ and his history becomes our history; our past life of sin, is gone and our new life is in him.

## Submission

Colossians 3:18

The ancient Greek word translated 'submit' is essentially a word borrowed from the military. It literally means "to be under in rank" or "to arrange forces under the guidance of a leader." It by no means infers that the one under the authority of the other is 'less than.' The form of the verb 'submit' used here shows that the submission is to be voluntary. So, wives are to be cooperative helpers to their husbands.

## Inheritance from the Lord

Colossians 3:24

Bondservants were not entitled to any inheritance from their wealthy masters. However, since as believers their true master is the Lord Jesus Christ, they will receive an inheritance from him. What is that inheritance? An eternal dwelling with him, one that does not perish or spoil, but lasts forever.

# INTERPRETATION

These questions are preparation for the group discussions and teaching.

Read Colossians 3:1-4:1.

1. Describe what you think Paul means by “things above” and “earthly things.” What must we do with the things above? How about the things on earth?

2. Read Colossians 3:8-9 and 3:10-17.

- Write down the list of things that we must “put off.”
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Write down the list of things that we must “put on.”
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- Describe what it means to “put on” and “put off.”











# THE IMAGE



# WE CARRY



# Jesus - The Image We Carry

Colossians 4:2-18

WEEK SIX

Paul concludes his letter by urging the church to pray and work on their hearts. He knows that what spills out of their hearts when they interact with each other and the world reflects upon the image of God. As believers it's crucial not to forget that we are the body of Christ. Accordingly, we must make every effort to live in such a way that brings honor and glory to the image of God.

# FOUNDATIONS

In the Foundations section we look at terms and concepts that have come up in our text that are foundational to our faith. Those who are new to the faith or to the Bible may find this part especially helpful!

## WORDS THAT COME UP IN OUR TEXT

### Mystery of Christ

Colossians 4:2

This mystery is the same as mentioned in 2:2 - Jesus revealed as the Christ, the treasury of all wisdom and knowledge. The great mystery - the mystery of God's loving purpose - is disclosed in Christ alone. Although Paul is in prison, he asks the believers at Colossae to pray for opportunities for Paul to share the gospel

### Tychicus

Colossians 4:7

Tychicus is the one delivering this letter as well as other news. Tychicus carried this message, and several others, from Rome and was accompanied by Onesimus. Among the letters Tychicus carried was one Paul wrote to the Ephesians.

### Onesimus

Colossians 4:9

Onesimus was a slave owned by a believer in Colosse, but he ran away and came into contact with Paul in Rome. There, Onesimus became a Christian and a dedicated helper to Paul. His story is continued in Paul's letter to Philemon.

### Aristarchus

Colossians 4:10

He was a Macedonian from Thessalonica (Acts 20:4). He was Paul's travel companion, and with the apostle when the Ephesian mob seized Paul (Acts 19:29). He was also with Paul when he set sail for Rome under his Roman imprisonment (Acts 27:2). Here Paul calls him my fellow prisoner. It seems that Aristarchus had an interesting habit of being with Paul in hard times.

### Epaphras

Colossians 4:12

Epaphras is from Colossae. He helped start the Colossian church and was highly respected there (Colossians 1:7). At some point, Epaphras traveled to Rome to visit Paul and was there at the time this letter was written. Epaphras sent personal greetings to his fellow believers in the letter, since it would be delivered by Tychicus and Onesimus.

### Laodicea

Colossians 4:15,16

This was a neighbouring city of Colosse. History tells us that Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis were part of a single tri-city area. This region is now known as Pamukkale, in southwest modern-day Turkey.

# INTERPRETATION

These questions are preparation for the group discussions and teaching.

Read Colossians 4:2-18.

1. Write down everything that Paul wanted the Colossians to understand about prayer.

2. Read Colossians 4:2-6. What words or themes come up that Paul has already spoken about.

- In what ways does he add to the themes?
- What do you think Paul was trying to accomplish through this?



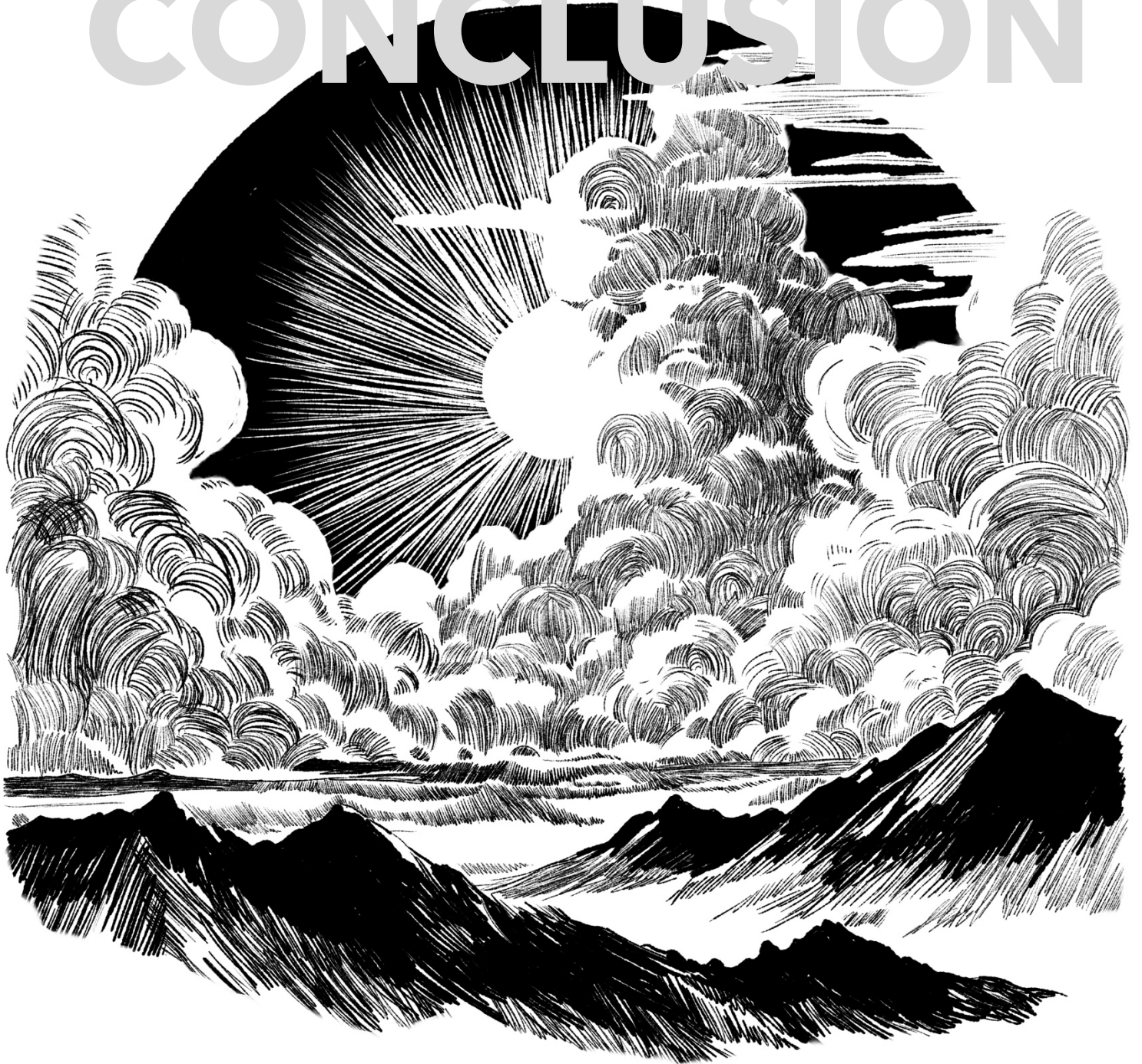




- Who must you welcome? Who are you praying for? Who could you encourage in the ministry God has given them?
4. What have you learned about responsibility and obligation to the body of Christ?
- In what ways are you tempted to be a 'consumer' when it comes to the church, rather than a contributor?



# CONCLUSION





## Conclusion |

We've come to the end of Colossians. Let's reflect on all we have learned about the Gospel and what it means to be rooted in the truth. How have you allowed this book to challenge, change and encourage you? Do you need to work on your spiritual "outfit"? Do you have a stronger and better foundation of the Gospel after working through this book?

# REFLECTIONS

These questions are preparation for the group discussions and teaching.

1. Reflect back on this book.

- What have you learnt?
- How have you been challenged?
- What changes do you need to make?

2. If someone asked you what the book of Colossians was all about, how would you sum it up?





We are indebted to Christ City Church for a lot of the study questions in this workbook.

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