



# *The Greatness of Christ:*

## *A Study of Colossians*

### *Week 1 - Overview*

#### **Intro**

- What is significant about the message of Colossians?
- The Jesus of History is the Christ of Faith
- Competing ideas and knowing our Savior

#### **Colossae**

- Civic and Geographic History
  - Colossae was not a great nor large city, but once was
  - It lived in the shadow of its neighbors: Hierapolis and Laodicea
  - Asia Minor was a mishmash of classic paganism, mystery cults, emperor worship, and Judaism
- Evangelization – Epaphras and Paul
  - Paul had never visited Colossae. Epaphras, who was from there, was the evangelist who founded the church. He brought word of the church to Paul, his letter was the response.
- Occasion of the Letter
  - Paul's desire is to see this fledgling church grow to maturity, which would require:
  - An understanding of the absolute importance of Christ, being able to discern competing ideas and theologies that will lead them astray, and continue in holiness and love

#### **Colossians**

- Dating
  - Likely early 50's, possibly late 40's. Location of the writing is difficult to nail down.
  - One of the "Prison Epistles" – Rome, Ephesus, Ceasarea, other
  - Likely written in Ephesus, which is only 100 miles from Colossae
- Authorship
  - There has been much debate, but solid case for Pauline authorship.
  - Style and language is somewhat different from, say, Romans or Galatians, but this does not require us to conclude a different author
  - Theology is consistent with Paul's
- Relationship to Ephesians
  - A great deal of passages in Colossians are found in Ephesians.
  - Which came first? Was one based on the other?
- Key ideas
  - The glory of Christ (1:15-20)
  - Staying grounded in the truth (2:7ff)
  - Do not feel excluded or second class because of Christ
  - Live in Christ with newness of life and hope
  - Personal greetings/matters