



PASSIONFORTRUTH

WHERE NEW LIFE BEGINS

Decoding Colossians Part 1: Who Is Jesus, Really?

by Jim Staley

<https://youtu.be/C889scsmmPY>



When Paul said in Colossians 1 that the Messiah was the **direct** image of the invisible God and everything was created for Him and by Him, what did that actually mean in the first century? My friends, this has been a controversy for almost 1,700–1,800 years. It's time to unpack all of it and find out exactly what Paul's trying to say to the church of Colossae. We're going to do

so all the way back past Protestantism, past Catholicism, past the church fathers. We're going to unpack it all from the original Jewish Hebraic perspective it was written in, right after this.

Hello everyone, Jim Staley here with [Passion for Truth Ministries](#). Welcome to this week's broadcast where we're going to be diving into the book of Colossians. We just finished the introduction. If you haven't watched that, I encourage you to watch that first so that you can really get a backdrop of what Paul is talking about, who the players are, what the debate is over, what he's dealing with—all of that. An incredible foundation needs to be laid to truly understand the book of Colossians. So, check that out first.

In the meantime, if you're looking for a channel, if you're not subscribed to this channel and you're looking for a channel that goes through the Bible verse by verse from the original Hebraic author's perspective understanding Jewish idioms, the expressions, the Hebraic backdrop of our faith, that's what we do here. We really look at what I call the front of the book, the Old Testament, and how it relates to the back of the book and put spirit and truth together. We're trying to do Bible things in Bible ways. So hit subscribe if you're not subscribed. Share this with other people if you think it would be beneficial to them. It is our privilege here at Passion for Truth to serve you in this

capacity, helping the Bible come alive by understanding it again from its original backdrop and language.

All right, so let's get past our language barrier of the 21st century Western Greco-Roman mindset and get back to the Scriptures. Here we go. We are in chapter 1 of Colossians, verse 1: *"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ who are in Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ."*

First, it just comes to me—for those of you that don't follow this ministry, you've maybe not heard this, but I went over this extensively in Acts, where Paul gets blinded by the light on his way to Damascus to kill Christians or to arrest Christians, give them a hassle. And a lot of people believe that Saul's name was changed from Saul to Paul when he converted. Two problems with that. One, he never converted to anything. *Paul was always a Jew, he always will be a Jew, and he died a Jew.* And all he did was believe that Messiah was Yeshua, that Yeshua was the Messiah. Number two, Paulos was his Greek name or his Roman name, but his birth name was Shaul, Saul. And so most people of the first century had two different names because they're operating both inside of Jewish circles and inside of Greek circles or Roman circles. And so, when they were around the Romans or Greeks, they were called Paul by their Roman name. And when they're around their Jews, they would call them by his Jewish name or his Hebrew name, and that would be Saul or Shaul. Just a little background there.

Moving forward, this is written to the brethren in Colossae, like we talked about in the introduction. This is mainly the Gentile-believing Christians that were operating, but also a strong Jewish presence, because every single one of these churches—virtually all of them—were operating out of synagogues. They would go to the synagogue on Saturday afternoon or Saturday morning on Shabbat, as it was their custom, as James, the head of the entire church, in Acts chapter 15 verse 21, commanded them, assuming that they're going to hear the Torah being preached because Moses is in every synagogue and they're going to hear it every single week on the Sabbath. And so, he's assuming that all the Gentiles are going to be learning the Torah each and every single week. Okay, now from there, the believers in Yeshua, both Jew and Gentile-like, would meet at someone's house that evening, so Saturday evening. When the sun went down, this is when Eutychus falls out of the window—Paul's preaching too long, and he falls asleep and dies at midnight on the first day of the week. Midnight on the first day of the week is always on Saturday night. There is no midnight any other time in biblical calculations of sunset to sunset being the days when they changed over. Every time there's a sunset, that's when the new day began. This is the typical pattern of the early church. They're meeting in the synagogues with the believing Jews, the non-believing Jews, the rabbis giving the Torah portion message, and then that evening they're going back to someone's house and they're unpacking it from a Christological perspective in the light of Christ. That's where we're at.

So in verse 3: *"We give thanks to God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you, since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love for all the saints, because of the hope which is laid up for you in heaven, of which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, which has come to you, as it has also in all the world, and it's bringing forth fruit."* And by the way, that little section right there is alluding to the Genesis account. This is the fruit that the tree of life

brings. When you eat from the tree of life, it brings and breeds more fruit. That is our point. And the apostles' point is, *"Hey, look, the gospel means that you're storing up treasures in heaven. Every time that you're eating of the good fruit, you're producing more fruit for the kingdom. You get that credit on Judgment Day in your account."*

"As it is also among you since the day you heard and knew the grace of God in truth, as you learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf, who also declared to us love in the Spirit." Now Epaphras is an interesting individual. He's the one that went to Paul while he was in prison, because this is likely being written in prison in Rome by most scholars' account. And that means Epaphras had to have travelled, because it says that he travelled to visit Paul in prison. That's 1,200 miles. Can you imagine that? Traveling **1,200 miles** on foot or camel—1,200 miles by car makes me sick to my stomach just thinking about that, much less having to traverse deserts and mountains and valleys and robbers and bandits and all kinds of crazy stuff just to get there in the presence of Paul and tell him what's going on in the Church of Colossae, which is why Paul is writing this—he's responding to Epaphras' concerns that we're going to get into in just a minute.

Now, this is really incredible because this is telling you the heart of Paul. Paul is not trying to tell you that we need to be filled with all knowledge. He says, in the heart of Paul, he wants us to be filled with the knowledge of His will, and in all wisdom and spiritual understanding. My friends, this is absolutely a whole other level of spiritual maturity that I could spend an hour on—the difference between understanding the Word of God, which is where we're at right now, which is basic 101, and I've already talked about multiple things that most believers in Christ have never even heard of. That's how basic—basic kindergarten that we are right now—because once you get past understanding the Word, now we've got to get into the knowledge of His will, and then the wisdom and spiritual understanding. How do I spiritually apply this unbelievable living word of God in my practical life? That's what we're trying to do here. It's not to just understand the Word of God, but practically put it into *practice*. How does it infuse itself into my life and come out of every part of what I do—think, speak, act? How do we do this? That's the spiritual understanding that we're looking for. And verse 10 tells us why: *"That you may walk worthy of the Lord."* Worthy of the Lord. Fully pleasing Him. Not halfway pleasing Him. Not sometimes pleasing Him. Do you ever feel like sometimes we grade ourselves on the curve based on how someone else is doing? I know I do that. Sometimes I look at my fellow teachers or my peers and scholars and go, *"Well, I'm this or I'm that, or man, I wish I could be more like that."* We compare ourselves to one another instead of comparing ourselves to Christ. And that should be not only our hope of glory, it should be our standard. We shouldn't care what other people around us think; we should care what God Himself thinks, because we truly are, in every way, playing for an audience of one, or at least we should be.

"Strengthened with all might, according to His glorious power, for all patience and longsuffering with joy, giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light." You see that, my friends? It says right here that the Father has qualified us to be partakers. This is the point of the Christian life, is that there might be a prophecy that you're going into the Promised Land, but that doesn't mean that God is not going to test you and allow you to go spy it out to see what's in your heart. As a matter of fact, I teach 25 Indian pastors every Thursday night, and this was a question that they had this last Thursday: *"Pastor Jim, how is it*

possible that God says He's going to give them the land? He's going to give them the land. And then their question was, why did the people ask to go spy it out first if God had already told them He was going to give it to them?" And I thought, you know, that's a really good question. You're getting into the depths of human depravity and our doubt that God really means what He says when He says that I've got your back, when He says that I will never leave you nor forsake you, when He says that I will always be faithful, even when you're faithless, even when you're not faithful, even when you make mistakes. I'm not going to make a mistake. I'm a sovereign God. I'm good all the time. I'm always looking out for you. It doesn't matter what's going on in your life, what circumstances you're facing. It doesn't matter how much the odds are up against you. It doesn't matter if it's 10,000 against Gideon's 300. I've got your back. I've got angels in the mulberry grove, if you will—I believe they were mulberry trees. I've got angels fluttering around with chariots of fire that you can't even see, says the Lord. I'm not going to let you down. But yet, we want to go check it out ourselves. And so this is one of our largest problems in our walk with God: we just don't trust Him at His word that He'll do what He said. Because you know why? We grow up our entire lives—decades at a time—and people let us down. So many people give us their word and then we break—they break their word. We break our word. We train each other to not trust anyone. And we infuse that trust onto God, unfortunately. And it shouldn't be that way.

Let's continue to move along, or this is going to be a very long video for this chapter. Verse 13: *"He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love, in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins."* Amen. Verse 15: *"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things co-exist. He is the head of the body. He is the head of the ecclesia, the congregation—in English it says church—who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in all things He may have the pre-eminence."*

This is a really amazing passage because the Christology that Paul is trying to get across is this is one of the problems that was happening in the church of Colossae. There were high-ranking Jews that were believing in the Messiah, and they were infecting the local congregations in this area, and many of Paul's congregations, by telling them that Jesus was not God, that He was just the Messiah. And this false doctrine is even all over the place even today and growing—that there are Christians everywhere, people that believe in Christ that do not believe that He is remotely connected to God. They take certain passages that they don't understand because of hierarchy and first-century Hebraic thought on how there could be two powers that are fused into one, like the lungs and the air that are totally connected, symbiotic relationship, but fully separate, but autonomous, but equal. Because which one do you want to get rid of first? They both operate in tandem with one another. And they skip over very clear sections like this. And so, there was a false gospel being permeated through the East here in these churches that Christ was not who He said He was when He said that, *"I am—before Abraham was, I am,"* and *"Me and the Father are one."* And so he makes it abundantly clear: Yeshua is the **image** of the invisible God. He is the firstborn over all creation. Now that phrase does not mean actual human firstborn. That's not what that phrase means. That's an idiomatic expression that was used all throughout the Tanakh, all throughout the Old Testament, and it refers to sovereignty or a pre-eminence. He used it of Israel—"My firstborn," right? That doesn't mean that Israel was physically born as a human being.

No, it was a nation, but he called it the firstborn. It's the very first thing. Paul is being very, very clear here. He is the pre-eminence over all creation, which is why he ends up saying that *"in all things He may have the pre-eminence,"* because Paul is saying He is the pre-eminence. He is the firstborn over all creation. By Yeshua, all things were created. If you stop right there, it's as clear as day. There's no mud. It's not ambiguous. Yeshua created all things. You cannot reinterpret this into *"for by God all things were created and that in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, all things were created through God and for God, and God is before all things, and in God all things consist, and God is the head of the body of the church."* You cannot change it because the subject in the language—in the grammar of the language, I should say—dictates who the subject is. And because He's talking about the Son of God, Yeshua Himself, very clearly, verse 15, when He says **"He,"** that subject is Yeshua. And so, all the rest of it is about Yeshua, and that's why it says in verse 19, He differentiates—He says, *"For it pleased the Father that in Yeshua, in Him, all the fullness should dwell."* The whole passage here is about Yeshua. It's about Christ and how Christ created all things. It doesn't matter if it's thrones, dominions, supernatural principalities and powers. Everything was created for Him. And here's the statement of the day. You can take this to the bank: the Creator cannot be part of His creation. So, if Yeshua created all things, He cannot be part of that creation. The creation is lower than the Creator. And this is where the conundrum comes from. This is where the doctrine of the triune God finds both support and difficulty because the human brain that only operates less than 10% of its capacity could never understand an infinite God in every direction. So, although I truly believe that Yeshua 100% is deity—I think you can't get any more clear than this, and Yeshua Himself said that He was the I Am, and that is why they ripped their garments and wanted to crucify Him for blasphemy, and He never even corrected them when they said, *"You make yourself out to be God,"* and He never even corrected them. There's a lot of other scriptures, and I'm not taking this Colossians 1 teaching commentary to prove the deity of Christ. I'm just going over this was a false doctrine that Paul is attacking. If you are interested in learning more of the background, the true Hebraic background, and the Jewish understanding of the triune God—which there really was in the first century, it's not that this was a Christian doctrine—the idea that there were two powers in heaven in the Old Testament alone is very well documented. If you want more information on that, I think I have a four-teaching set that I did many years ago called [Trinity on Trial](#). You can click on that or click on it in the description and watch that at your own convenience.

"For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell." All the fullness of what? All the fullness of the Godhead. Everything dwells in the Messiah. Everything doesn't dwell in us; it dwelt in Him. He is the direct image of His being. We are just in His image. We are like the shadow. As a matter of fact, I have six daughters, and for those of you out there that have children, I'll tell you a funny story. My daughters were on a golf cart ride the other day, and they had my granddaughter with them, and they got pulled over by a police officer—this woman police officer who was so nice—and she came up to the golf cart, and because, you know, the baby was there, and two of the kids were standing up on the back of the golf cart, of course, right? And the very first thing that the police officer said was, *"Why do all of you guys look alike, identical?"* And so she could tell they were all related. They were all sisters. There was no getting away from it. And she was super kind and super nice. And she said, *"I wouldn't have even pulled you guys over if your two sisters wouldn't have been standing up on the back of the golf cart."* They did get a talking to when they got home, by the way, but from dad. But at the end of the day, my point is that was so much image

similarity that the police officer knew she could totally tell they're all sisters. There was definite similarity. And if they saw me—because they mostly look like me—they would understand that these are children in my image. They are not the direct image of Jim Staley. They are in my image. They are a shadow of my image. That's the image, if you will, that Paul is trying to paint: that there is, without a doubt, an image. That's us—it's slight, it's not so much of an image. We're not very good at image bearing. But Yeshua—**direct image**. Direct, okay? The fullness of God's image was in Him.

And so in verse 21: *"And you who are alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He is reconciled in the body and the flesh through death, to present you holy and blameless and above reproach in His sight."* Of course, He's mentioning how they used to be Gentiles, how they were former pagan in their practices, and now Yeshua has brought them in, forgiven them and redeemed them, and presenting them blameless, as if they never did anything. *"If indeed you continue in the faith, grounded and steadfast, and are not moved away from the hope of the gospel which you heard, which was preached to every creature under heaven, of which I, Paul, became a minister."* So he's telling you, look, he's telling them, not only are you saved, but you need to continue in the faith. Your future is dependent on you continuing. And let me just make a prophetic statement for someone out there. Your future is not dependent on your past. Let that sit for a minute. Your future is not dependent on how many mistakes that you've made. You might even have made big mistakes. I know that I have made very big mistakes in my life—huge mistakes that I regret. And I bet there's a lot of people out there listening to my voice that you can agree with me: if you could do life over again with what you know now, I bet our mistakes would be cut by 90% because we recognize the consequences were just not worth going down that road.

But thank God, our future's not dependent on what we've done. Our future—listen carefully—is dependent on what we do right now. It's not if you fall. Your future is dependent on if you get back up. Proverbs 24:16 says that a righteous man falls seven times, but the wicked fall and don't even get back up. It's all about whether or not you get back up. Are you falling forward? In other words, with every failure, because I don't know about you, but sometimes I feel like a failure. Sometimes I feel like I'm not good enough. I'm not worthy. I feel like I don't know enough. I feel like I'm not holy enough. I feel like I can't completely get a hold of my thought process all the time. My mind runs a million miles a minute. Anybody out there? If that's you, will you comment? I'm just like that. Just put it in the comments. Tell me what you struggle with. But all I know is that sometimes I just don't feel like I'm worthy. And I have to fall in the arms of my Savior and go, *"God, I feel like I'm a blind man."* You know, the other day—actually it was yesterday—I was praying and I just felt like, *"God, man, I'm blind. I feel like I just don't know anything."* And then I came across a passage and it literally said, when I was teaching these Indian pastors, I ran across a passage that said, *"If you believe that you can see, you're blind. But if you are blind and you don't believe you can see, you have spiritual sight. You can see."* And that made me feel a little bit better because I always feel like I'm not good enough. And I know that perfectionism in me, but it's more of like this crushing of my soul that recognizes that I don't think I'm ever going to be good enough for not just God, but for people that have expectations that are impossible to reach. You ever feel like that? You're just not going to be able to reach that high for your spouse, your children, or maybe even for yourself? God says, *"Just fall forward. Continue in the faith. There's great things coming for you."*

That's why he says in verse 24: *"I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body which is the church, of which I became a minister according to the stewardship from God which was given to me for you, to fulfill the word of God."* His entire motivation every time he wakes up is fulfilling the Word of God. He wants to know the will of God. He wants to live in the wisdom and spiritual understanding. That should be your prayer. You should write it in the comments, because when you write things, it puts it into your brain. Put it in the comments: *"I want to know the will of God, and I want to have wisdom and spiritual understanding."* And write it as a prayer. Say, *"God, help me to know Your will. Help me to fulfill Your will. Help me to have wisdom and spiritual understanding."* You know, for years—decades even—when I was younger, starting when I was probably—I really committed my life to the Lord when I was a sophomore in high school, so that would have been like 1990, 89 or 90—I was asking God, *"Lord, give me—"* I'm just going to be really vulnerable. This is what I prayed as a 15-year-old: *"Father, give me more wisdom than anyone has ever had in the last 2,000 years since Your Son was on this earth. Give me wisdom so I can help lead Your people."* This is what I prayed when I was 15 and 16 years old. And I believed it. All I wanted was wisdom, because I felt like the scriptures were right. If I had wisdom, it kind of covers everything. Knowledge, understanding, discernment—all of that falls underneath wisdom. Spiritual understanding is guided by the foundation of wisdom.

Verse 25: *"Of which I became a minister to fulfill the word of God, the mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now is being revealed to His saints. To them God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."* My friends, I did an entire teaching called [Identity Crisis](#) where I walk from Genesis to Revelation and show you the identity crisis of Israel and how it split into two kingdoms, and how the kingdom of the north went into captivity in 722 BC into Assyria and were divorced from the covenant, they could never come back. And how in 586 BC, the southern kingdom of Judah went into Babylon for 70 years, but they came back, and they were the only ones that maintained covenant. And then the northern kingdom was prophesied to turn into Gentiles—that they would be assimilated into Gentiles because they would lose their identity, but they would be allowed to come back even though the Torah says they're not allowed to come back because it restricts a wife from coming back to the original husband under one condition. And it's absolutely incredible. And I'm not going to tell you what it is because it is a mic-drop moment. I encourage you to watch [Identity Crisis](#) so you can fully understand what is going on. That Identity Crisis—if it's not out right now, there is a brand-new Identity Crisis 2.0 coming. So, make sure you check back for that. But this is the mystery that Paul is talking about. This mystery of how God is going to solve the problem of divorcing His bride, and His own law says that she can't come back. God solves that in the form of the Son and becomes the hope of glory for the saints. And the saints have always been defined as the remnant of Israel. There's no such thing as saints outside of the remnant of Israel.

The entire Bible talks about the saints of God are those that are inside the commonwealth of Israel, Ephesians 2. Gentiles who were once far off now begin to come close and draw near to the covenants of promise. We become citizens of the commonwealth of Israel, according to Paul himself in the book of Ephesians, which is absolutely connected to the book of Colossians because it's only 100 miles from here. So, the Laodiceans, the Colossians, the Ephesians—all of them are all connected, even Philemon, and we'll be going through those books as well. In the

meantime, Paul is letting them know that, look, this Jesus Christ, this Yeshua, is solving the greatest mysteries of the prophets that there ever was. He's bringing the hope of glory to you Gentiles who were once far off, bringing you close and near to the covenants of promise. You're grafted into the olive tree, Jeremiah 11, Romans 11. That is Israel. We're connected to all of those covenants. We're not separate. There's no such thing as a house of Gentiles, my friends. The New Covenant is with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. Go look it up yourself—Jeremiah 31:31, the only place in the whole Old Testament that prophesies the New Covenant. And the Gentiles can't even be a part of it, but we get to be. We're invited to be part of Israel, just like the mixed multitude that came out of Egypt and joined Israel, and God said, *"Look, I want one law for the native born and the sojourner. One kingdom, one law, one constitution, one king. With liberty and justice for all,"* I'm sure. And that's where we're at.

So, *"Him we preach, warning every man and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus. To this end I also labor, striving according to His working, which works in me mightily."* Every day we should be waking up asking God, *"Would You please work in me mightily? What can I do for You today, God? How can I retrofit this broken body to be a tool used for Your glory?"* I know that many of you are like me. Every morning I wake up and I don't understand why God woke me up. That He gives me breath for another day is a miracle to me of mercy. Most of my life, I've lived my life in a prideful position, and now I'm in a position where God has brought me to a place—maybe it's because I'm over 50, maybe it's because I've made more mistakes than I care to admit—but all I know is it's a beautiful thing to fall in the hands of a merciful God. A God that loves us so much that He gives us chance after chance. He's giving you chance after chance because He wants to use you. He wants you to have the great purpose that He designed from the very beginning when the sperm met the egg and you became a baby in your mother's womb. It's at that moment where He saw you and He has plans for you. Never forget that, my friends.

As we're walking through these scriptures to learn them from the original perspective of the author, it's more than the knowledge that we're looking for. It's the Holy Spirit's spiritual wisdom that we're trying to gain. It's the understanding of the will of God that we're looking for. God is after one thing—you. He wants to wrap you up in His arms. He wants to forgive you of your sins. He wants to smile, put His arm around you, and say, *"Okay now, son, daughter, let's go. You got this."*

All right, my friends, well, we've come to an end. We're going to move over to Colossians 2 next, so make sure you join us next week. In the meantime, thank you so much for spending this time with us. Go check out our website at passionfortruth.com. We've got hundreds of articles that a lot of people don't know about, on top of hundreds of other videos that are available here on YouTube. The playlist is hundreds deep and thick. I pray that you will find something that you can take a look at. Definitely the new Identity Crisis is one that you want to check out. And at the end of the day, we can't do this broadcast without you. We need your support more now than ever. If you're not tithing to a local congregation and you consider us part of your family, would you consider throwing a few shekels our way? It would definitely help us. We have a lot of mouths to feed here at Passion for Truth and employees all across the globe that are working diligently for you every day. You can do that at passionfortruth.com at the top right-hand corner of your screen. In the meantime, I'm Jim Staley with Passion for Truth Ministries, and I'll see you in the next video. Shalom.

Passion For Truth Ministries

P.O. Box 365 ❖ 5323 Highway N

Cottleville, MO 63338-9998

Email: info@passionfortruth.com

❖ www.passionfortruth.com ❖