Paul’s Letter to the Colossians  
1. Introduction (1:1-2)

One year at Cub Scout camp, when I was a youngster, I remember making a model of our solar system out of Styrofoam balls. In the center of my model was the largest sphere, painted yellow, to represent the sun. After this, I painted each of the nine planets in different colors, and positioned them in their proper place. Mercury was red because it is closest to the sun, and has temperatures too intense to support life. The little blue ball, third from the sun, represented earth, our home. My model was held together with wooden dowel rods, string, and a little glue. Though it was no masterpiece, I was exceedingly satisfied with my workmanship.

Looking back, this reminds me of the force that truly holds our universe together…the Lord Jesus Christ. Colossians 1:17 tells us, “He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” If it were not for God’s creative power, we wouldn’t be here today. The universe would have never come into being. And if He let go, our world would instantly fly apart into oblivion.

The supremacy of Christ is one of the main themes of Paul’s letter to the Colossians. Apparently, false teaching had begun to infiltrate the church in that city, calling into question the deity of Christ. The apostle responded by instructing them in correct doctrine (chapters 1-2), and then giving practical instruction as to how believers ought to live (chapters 3-4). Jesus Christ is the center of our faith, our worship, and our life!

I. Background of the City of Colossae:

- Colossae was a city in the R________________ province of Asia (Asia Minor or modern day Turkey), about 100 miles southeast of Ephesus. It was situated along a major highway running east and west through the region. Neighboring cities include Laodicea and Hierapolis.

- While Colossae had once been a great city during the era of the G________________ empire, it was no longer a large or prominent city in the period of the New Testament.

- The inhabitants of Colossae were of d________________ ethnicity. Along with the native Phrygians, there were also Greeks, Romans, and Jews living in the city.

II. Background of the Letter:

- Along with Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon, Colossians is one of Paul’s P______________ Epistles. It was written while Paul was in chains as a prisoner of Rome (between 60-63 A.D.).

- Most likely, the church came about as a result of Paul’s ministry in E______________ (Acts 19:8-10) although Paul had never visited this group of Christians in Colossae in person (Colossians 2:1).
• One of Paul’s fellow missionaries, a man named E_____________ who was a native of this region, brought the gospel to the city of Colossae and the congregation was founded as a result (Colossians 1:6-7; 4:12).

• The main r_________________ for the letter is to deal with false teaching that threatened to lead believers astray. Paul wrote to the church to expose the dangers of this heresy, and to encourage them to continue in the faith. One author writes, “To a large extent the entire Epistle may be seen as an apostolic antidote to popular but erroneous opinions that threaten the purity of Christian doctrine and the integrity of Christian practice at Colossae.” (Encountering the New Testament, p.318)

• While we do not know the precise nature of the false teaching, it seems to have elevated the position of a_______________ to a higher place than Christ (2:18), it emphasized outward observances and rituals as a path to becoming more s_______________ (2:16), and it claimed to offer a higher p________________ or knowledge to its followers (2:8).

• Colossians is very relevant to our lives today, because there are so many competing philosophies and religious beliefs that threaten to take one’s f_______________ away from Christ. We need to continually have our eyes fixed on the one and only Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

III. Outline of Colossians:

----- Part One: The Supremacy of Christ -----  
I. Introduction (1:1-14)

II. The Preeminence of Christ… (1:15-2:3)
   A. in creation (1:15-18)
   B. in redemption (1:19-23)
   C. in the Church (1:24-2:3)

III. Freedom in Christ… (2:4-23)
   A. from enticing words (2:4-7)
   B. from vain philosophy (2:8-10)
   C. from the judgment of men (2:11-17)
   D. from improper worship (2:18-19)
   E. from the doctrine of men (2:20-23)

----- Part Two: Submission to Christ -----  
IV. The Position of the Believer (3:1-4)

V. The Practice of the Believer (3:5-4:6)

VI. Conclusion (4:7-18)

Bibliographies:
Tidball, Derek  The Illustrated Survey of the Bible, Bethany House Publishers: Minneapolis, MN 2001 (p.220-223)
Judging by Colossians 2:1, St. Paul had not visited Colossae by the time of this Letter. His fellow servant Epaphras had apparently evangelized the Colossians (1:7, 4:12). Chapter One of Colossians is crucial to Pauline theology, and one of the more important passages in the New Testament. The hymn of Colossians 1:14-19 speaks of Christ as the mediator of creation and redemption. Christ is called the Head of his Body the Church in Colossians 1:18 and 1:24, also noted in Ephesians 5:23. The concept of joining our suffering with that of Christ is alluded to in Colossians 1:24. St. Paul speaks of The Colossian letter makes the explicit claim to be from the hand of Paul. In 1:1 the text says, \textit{From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God}. The writer again refers to himself in 1:23 as \textit{Paul, a servant of the gospel}. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the consensus surrounding Pauline authorship began to be questioned, on several grounds, the first being language and style. It is argued that there are many hapax legomena in Colossians and that there are unusual groupings of synonyms (1:9; 3:16) uncommon to Paul. But these judgments are far too subjective to count significantly against the traditional view since the use of different terms and style can be accounted for simply on the basis of the different circumstances. The inspired letter of the apostle Paul to Christians in Colossae. As usually placed in modern English versions of the Bible, it is the 12th book of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Paul identifies himself as the writer of this inspired letter by opening it with the words: \textit{From Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus through the will of God}. The apostle’s writership is also established by the final greeting, written in his own hand. There is quite a similarity between Colossians and Ephesians... Two factors apparently motivated Paul to write his letter to the Colossians. For one thing, Epaphras had brought the apostle a report of the congregation’s spiritual state. The Letters of St. Paul to the Colossians and Ephesians. Colossians and Ephesians are very similar to each other in many ways, but both are significantly different from the earlier “undisputed” letters of Paul; yet biblical scholars disagree as to how these differences can best be explained. Some scholars say the differences are the result of shifts in Paul’s thinking as he got older; thus, both letters must have been written late in Paul’s life, just before his death (see Col 4:3-4, 10, 18; Eph 3:1; 4:1). Other scholars say the differences are better explained by considering the letters to be pseudepigraphic; some of his followe