



EVERLASTING JOY
Introduction
Book of Colossians

Welcome to our study of the Book of Colossians. Ephesians and Colossians are sometimes known as the “Twin Epistles.” Some scholars describe Colossians as Paul’s most profound writing, as well as being the most Christ-centered book of the New Testament. Paul writes Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon from his prison in Rome. Like Ephesians, the first half of the book is doctrinal, while the last two chapters are practical. Young Timothy is also mentioned in each of the greetings.

Before we look at this book chapter by chapter, we need to understand the history behind its writings. When, where, and to whom this book was written will help us to discover the purpose and reason Paul wrote this letter to the believers in Colossae. Make sure you pray before you begin, asking the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to everything the Lord wants to speak to your heart. This book reminds us that Jesus is in all and through all, completely exalting Jesus Christ as God and Savior. May the truths taught in this Epistle change your heart and your life forever.

Let’s look at some basic facts relating to this Epistle before we jump in. Paul introduces himself as the author in 1:1 and 4:4, offering his credentials to remind them who he is. This letter was written to the believers in Colossae (1:2) and was also meant to be read to the church of Laodicea (4:16).

The City of Colossae

Colossae was located in the region of Phrygia and was a Roman Province in Asia (modern-day Turkey). It was one of the “tri-cities” of the Lycus valley, about 100 miles east of Ephesus. Colossae was once a very prosperous and busy city, located on a main and busy trade route. It was prone to earthquakes and was actually destroyed by one in the 12th century, later to be rebuilt. During the time of Paul’s writing, Colossae was a simple and small city because they had rerouted the trade way. It remained an important center of wool industry because of all the sheep that grazed on the pasturelands. Colossae had a very large Gentile and Jewish population.

During Paul’s third missionary journey, he visited the city of Ephesus, and remained there for three years. Acts 19:10 tells us that “all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks.” This is most likely when the “tri-cities” of Colossae, Hierapolis, and Laodicea heard the Gospel, although Paul himself had never visited there (2:1). Most likely, a man named Epaphras, a native Colossian (4:12), heard the Good News and took it back to his hometown where he began a church (1:5-7). Epaphras made the long journey to Rome to see Paul, which initiated this letter to the Colossians. Like the other prison Epistles, this letter was probably delivered by his friends Onesimus and Tychicus (Ephesians 6:21-22; Col. 4:7-9).

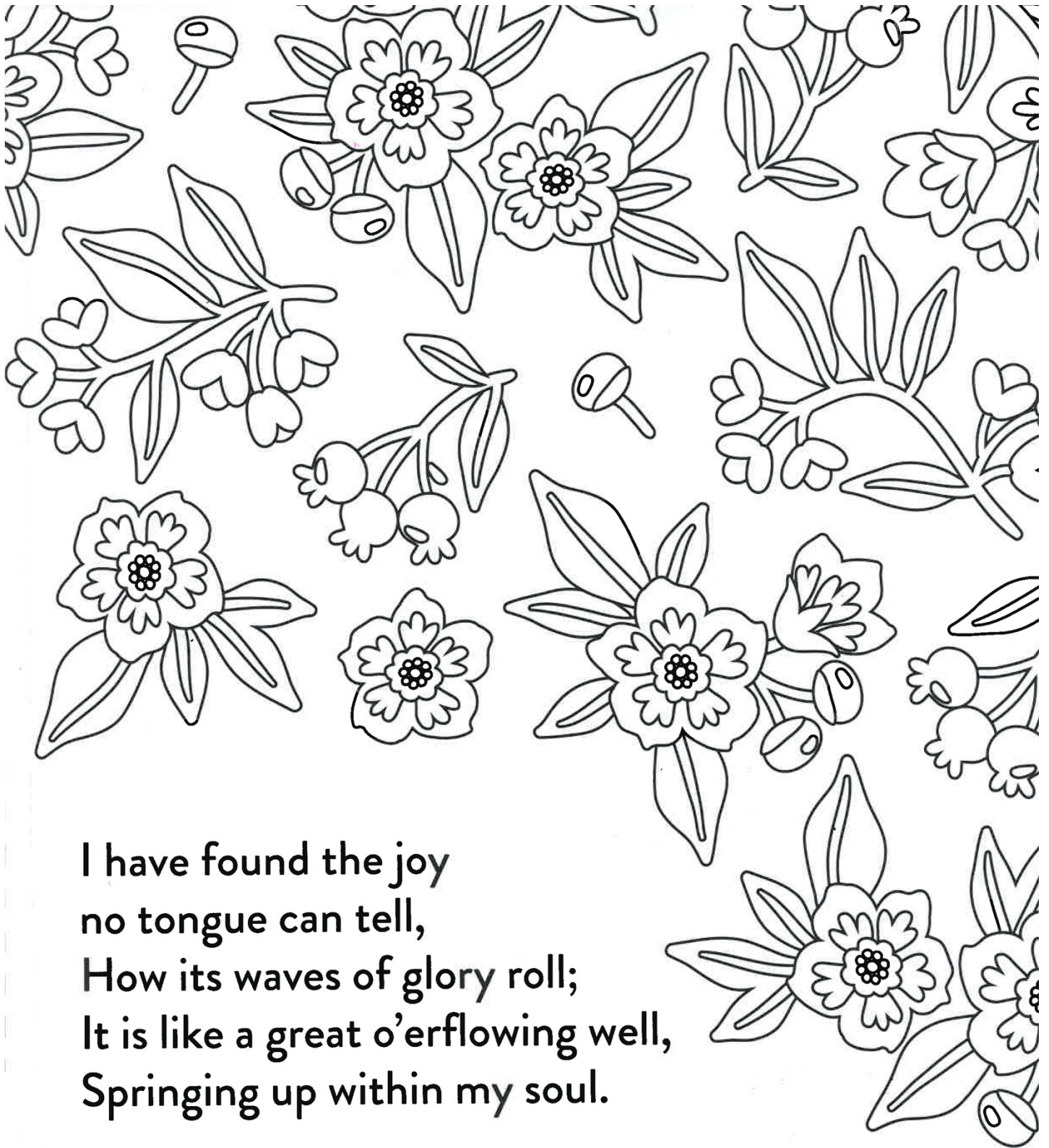
The Purpose of Colossians

This letter has been called by some Paul’s “preventative” letter. Because of the mix of religions in Colossae, heresies were everywhere. Epaphras was worried the Colossians would embrace these false doctrines, so he came to see Paul for his advice and encouragement. Although it seems that the Colossians had not yet fallen to these heresies, they were probably being severely tempted. The heresies being taught can’t be identified with any particular historical system. It was a combination of false Greek philosophy and Judaistic legalism and ceremonialism. Some believe it was a mix of Gnosticism and the beliefs of the Essenes. Because of the high population of Gentiles, the pagan worship of many gods was widespread. Also being taught was the worship of angels (2:18); the glorification and worship of human knowledge (2:8); legalism, involving circumcision, ordinances, foods, holidays, etc. (2:11,16); and rigid self-

denial and harsh treatment of the body. The false teachers were denying the deity of Christ and the sufficiency of Christ for salvation. Paul attacks these teachings in many places in this letter (1:28, 2:3, 9-10).

The Theme of Colossians

The theme of this Epistle is the sufficiency of Christ for salvation (2:9). One commentator wrote, "The theme of the book can be summed up in the words of Colossians 3:11: 'Christ is all and in all.' He is God (2:9), Creator (1:16), Savior (1:20; 2:13-14), and head of the Church (1:18). It was Paul's desire in writing Colossians that we would realize that Christ has come 'to have first place in everything'. (1:18) I believe this all fits into our overarching theme of **EVERLASTING JOY**, don't you? He is the **Reason we Rejoice!**



I have found the joy
no tongue can tell,
How its waves of glory roll;
It is like a great o'erflowing well,
Springing up within my soul.

“Joy Unspeakable,” Barney Elliot Warren