

Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic

J.K. McKee



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The Epistles to the Colossians and to Philemon are two of the most overlooked letters in the Apostolic Scriptures (New Testament) by today's Messianic community. Too frequently, our engagement level with Colossians is limited to words that Paul issues about Torah practices like Sabbath-keeping or kosher eating or about something being nailed to the cross. Because Christian friends and family often use partial quotes from Colossians to refute Messianic Believers who are Torah observant, we often try to avoid Paul's letter. And like many of today's evangelical Christians, Paul's letter to Philemon is totally avoided, simply because we do not know what to do with the issue of slavery. Ignoring these two letters cannot be allowed to continue any longer. Colossians and Philemon, two letters of Paul written together, are actually not too difficult to understand when read as a whole—and when we consciously make a point to interpret them for their original, First Century audiences first. What was the false teaching circulating among the Believers in Ancient Colossae? Was it first Jewish, and then pagan—or first pagan, and then Jewish? When the Apostle Paul uplifts Messiah Yeshua, is he simply claiming that He is like the impersonal force Wisdom-or something much more than Wisdom? Does Paul really affirm Yeshua as being the Deity-God Himself incarnated as a human? How were things like the Sabbath and appointed times improperly used by the false teachers in an ascetic philosophy designed to appeal to the cosmic powers over which the Messiah had prevailed? What can we learn about the mystery of the ages, and how the power of the gospel can change anyone? What role does a letter like Philemon play in our reading of the Bible? In the commentary Colossians and Philemon for the Practical Messianic, Messianic Apologetics editor J.K. McKee shows us why today's Messianic Believers need not be afraid of these two letters any more. A wide array of scholastic opinion is considered in regard to these two texts, especially the various proposals made about the false teaching that disrupted the Believers in Colossae. Contemporary applications for some negative trends being witnessed in today's Messianic movement are also proposed, especially in terms of the false philosophy and worship of angels refuted by Paul. Colossians and Philemon are both important letters for us to understand, as today's Messianic community strives to move forward in its reading of the Pauline Epistles.

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