

Paul's Letter to the Church in Colossae – Part 1 (c. 60)

Colossians 1

Greeting

1 Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,
2 To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ *who are* at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.

Thanksgiving for the Colossians' Faith

3 We give thanks to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, praying always for you,
4 since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints;
5 because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel
6 which has come to you, just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as *it has been doing* in you also since the day you heard *of it* and understood the grace of God in truth;
7 just as you learned *it* from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf,
8 and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit.

Prayer for Spiritual Growth

9 For this reason also, since the day we heard *of it*, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding,
10 so that you will walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, to please *Him* in all respects, bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;
11 strengthened with all power, according to His glorious might, for the attaining of all steadfastness and patience; joyously
12 giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified us to share in the inheritance of the saints in Light.
13 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son,
14 in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

The Heart of the Gospel—the Supremacy of Christ

15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
16 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him.
17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.
18 He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything.
19 For it was the *Father's* good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,
20 and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, *I say*, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

You Have Been Reconciled—Stand Firm in the Faith

21 And although you were formerly alienated and hostile in mind, *engaged* in evil deeds,
22 yet He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach—
23 if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast, and not moved away from the hope of the gospel that you have heard, which was proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and of which I, Paul, was made a minister.

Paul's Commitment to the Gospel

24 Now I rejoice in my sufferings for your sake, and in my flesh I do my share on behalf of His body, which is the church, in filling up what is lacking in Christ's afflictions.

25 Of *this church* I was made a minister according to the stewardship from God bestowed on me for your benefit, so that I might fully carry out the *preaching of* the word of God,

26 *that is*, the mystery which has been hidden from the *past* ages and generations, but has now been manifested to His saints,

27 to whom God willed to make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28 We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.

29 For this purpose also I labor, striving according to His power, which mightily works within me.

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Chronological Notes1) Date.¹

- A) "If written by Paul from Rome, then one must place the composition of the letter around 58–60 according to the chronology of Paul suggested in this text." As already mentioned, I follow Kostenberger's chronology for Paul's prison epistles and date Colossians to c. 60.

2) Provenance.²

- A) "The presence of Luke, Aristarchus, Timothy, and other coworkers with Paul at the time of writing are important clues for the provenance of Colossians. The presence of Luke appears to support a Roman provenance because Acts places Luke with Paul in Rome, while Paul's Ephesian ministry is not one of the 'we' passages in Acts. Acts 27:2 also indicates that Aristarchus accompanied Paul to Italy and most likely all the way to Rome. Although Acts does not mention the presence of Timothy in Rome, the Acts narrative closes without identifying by name any persons who visited Paul in Rome during his house arrest. In light of the close relationship shared by Paul and Timothy, one would expect Timothy to visit Paul sometime during the two-year Roman imprisonment. Although good arguments can be made for Ephesus, the balance of the evidence favors a Roman provenance."

¹ Andreas J. Kostenberger, L. Scott Kellum, Charles L. Quarles, *The Cradle, the Cross, and the Crown*, (B&H Academic, 2009), p. 604.

² Kostenberger, pp. 604–605.