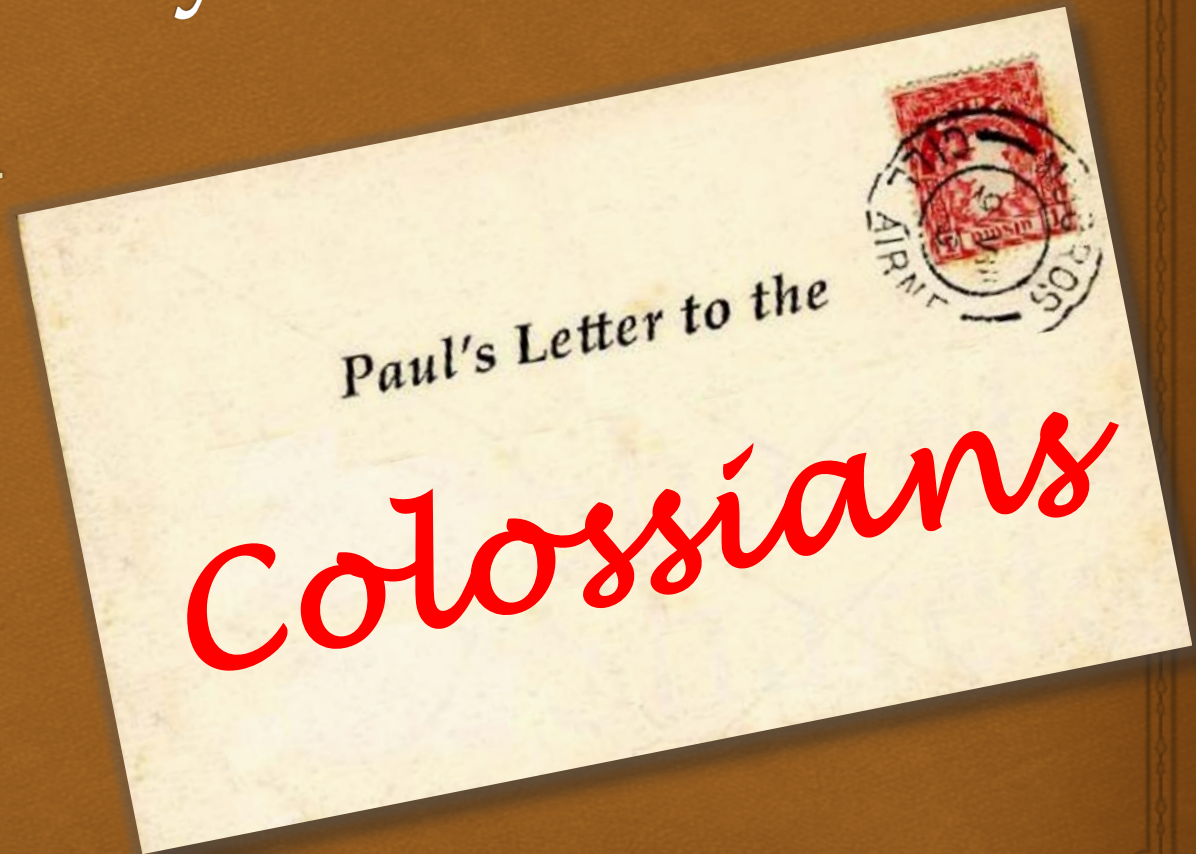


# The All Sufficiency of Christ



*Introduction and  
Colossians 1:1-2*



# The City of Colossae



## Location

Interior part of the Roman province of Asia (modern day Turkey)



# The

Location

Interior part of the

## THE ROMAN EMPIRE IN NEW TESTAMENT TIMES





☞ Location  
☞ Interior





# The City of Colossae



## Location

- Interior part of the Roman province of Asia (modern day Turkey)
- Formed a triad of cities with Laodicea (10 miles W) and Hierapolis (13 miles NW)



# The City of Colossae



## History

During the Persian and Greek empires

Colossae was a city of considerable importance

Important center of the wool industry, sheep grazed on nearby fertile pasture lands, and dyes were made from nearby chalk deposits

City was located on a trade route

During the Roman empire

Road to Pergamos was rerouted through Laodicea, bypassing Colossae

Colossae experienced social and commercial decline

By the 1<sup>st</sup> century, Colossae was an insignificant market town

# The Church at Colossae



- ❧ No mention in Acts of the church being founded in Colossae
- ❧ Laeodicea and Hierapolis both mentioned as having communities of believers

**Colossians 4:13** For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.



# The Church at Colossae



- ❧ No mention in Acts of the church being founded in Colossae
- ❧ Laeodicea and Hierapolis both mentioned as having communities of believers
- ❧ Towns likely evangelized during Paul's extended time in Ephesus

**Acts 19:10** This took place for two years, so that all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord, both Jews and Greeks.



# The Church at Colossae



- ❧ No mention in Acts of the church being founded in Colossae
- ❧ Laeodicea and Hierapolis both mentioned as having communities of believers
- ❧ Towns likely evangelized during Paul's extended time in Ephesus
- ❧ Church not founded by Paul

**Colossians 2:1** For I want you to know how great a struggle I have on your behalf and for those who are at Laodicea, and for all those who have not personally seen my face

# The Church at Colossae



- ❧ No mention in Acts of the church being founded in Colossae
- ❧ Laeodicea and Hierapolis both mentioned as having communities of believers
- ❧ Towns likely evangelized during Paul's extended time in Ephesus
- ❧ Church not founded by Paul
- ❧ Church founded by Epaphras (native of Colossae)

**Colossians 1:5–7** <sup>5</sup>...the gospel...<sup>7</sup>just as you learned it from Epaphras, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf



# The Author of Colossians



✧ Paul

✧ Support within the letter itself

**Colossians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother

**Colossians 4:18** I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

# The Author of Colossians



## ☞ Paul

☞ Support within the letter itself

☞ Support from the church fathers

☞ Challenges

☞ Mid-19<sup>th</sup> century challenge – claiming letter reflects 2<sup>nd</sup> century Gnosticism

☞ More recent challenges

☞ 50+ words in Colossians not found in Paul's other writings

☞ Distinct terms used by Paul elsewhere not found in Colossians

☞ Style different from Paul's other writings



# The Author of Colossians



## ✧ Paul

- ✧ Support within the letter itself
- ✧ Support from the church fathers
- ✧ Challenges
- ✧ Support from Philemon
  - ✧ Both Colossians and Philemon:
    - ✧ Sent to the same town
    - ✧ Include the names of Paul, Timothy, Onesimus, Epaphras, Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke
    - ✧ Contain a message to Archippus
  - ✧ Paul's authorship of Philemon is not questioned

# The Author of Colossians



## ✧ Paul

- ✧ Support within the letter itself
- ✧ Support from the church fathers
- ✧ Challenges
- ✧ Support from Philemon
- ✧ Conclusion: All the evidence points to Paul as its author



# The Place and Date of Writing



## Place

Written during his imprisonment

**Colossians 4:18** I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my imprisonment. Grace be with you.

# The Place and Date of Writing



## ☞ Place

☞ Written during his imprisonment

☞ In Caesarea?

☞ Unlikely so small a city as Caesarea would have been the hub for the kinds of missionary activities mentioned in Colossians



# The Place

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## ☞ Place

- ☞ Written during his imprisonment?
- ☞ In Caesarea?
- ☞ Unlikely so small a city with missionary activity

**Colossians 4:10-14** **Aristarchus**, my fellow prisoner, sends you his greetings; and also Barnabas's cousin **Mark** (about whom you received instructions; if he comes to you, welcome him); and also Jesus who is called **Justus**; these are the only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are from the circumcision, and they have proved to be an encouragement to me.

**Epaphras**, who is one of your number, a bondslave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God. For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis. **Luke**, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also **Demas**.

# The Place and Date of Writing



## ☞ Place

☞ Written during his imprisonment

☞ In Caesarea?

☞ Unlikely so small a city as Caesarea would have been the hub for the kinds of missionary activities mentioned in Colossians

☞ If here, Paul would have made some mention of Philip, with whom Paul stayed shortly before his arrest

**Acts 21:8** On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him.



# The Place and Date of Writing



## ☞ Place

☞ Written during his imprisonment

☞ In Caesarea? ❌

☞ In Ephesus?

☞ There is no clear evidence that Paul was ever imprisoned there

☞ Luke was with Paul when Colossians was written but not with Paul during his ministry in Ephesus

**Colossians 4:14** Luke, the beloved physician, sends you his greetings, and also Demas.

# The Place and Date of Writing



## Place

Written during his imprisonment

In Caesarea? ❌

In Ephesus? ❌

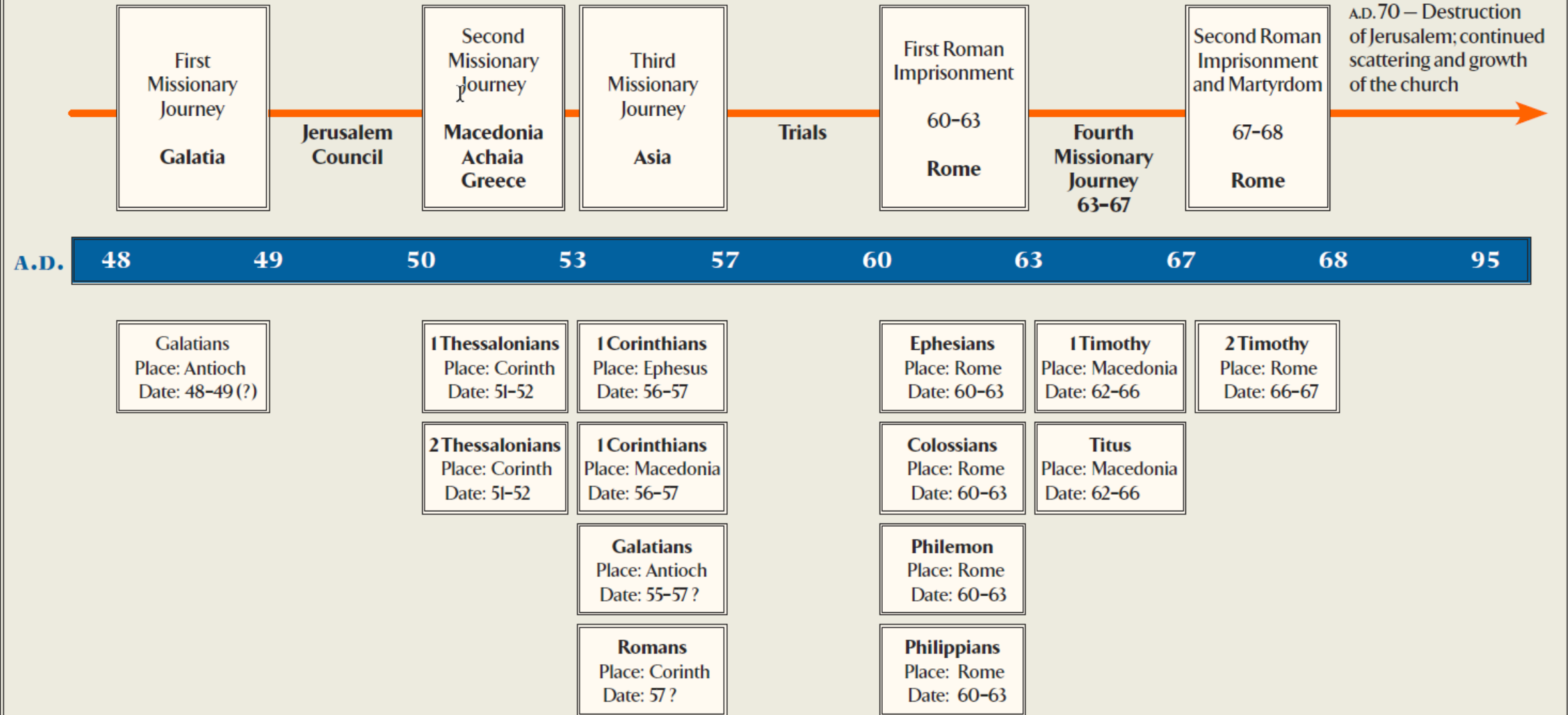
In Rome? ✅

Traditional view and the one most widely held

**Acts 28:30–31** And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters and was welcoming all who came to him, preaching the kingdom of God and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.



# TIME LINE OF PAUL'S EPISTLES



# The Place and Date of Writing



## ☞ Place

☞ Written during his imprisonment

☞ In Caesarea? ❌

☞ In Ephesus? ❌

☞ In Rome? ✅

## ☞ Date

☞ About AD 62, during his 1<sup>st</sup> Roman imprisonment

# The Occasion for Writing



✧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae

**Colossians 1:7-8** <sup>7</sup>...**Epaphras**, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf, <sup>8</sup>and he also **informed us** of your love in the Spirit.



# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of this false teaching
  1. It was a philosophy

**Colossians 2:8** See to it that no one takes you captive through **philosophy** and empty deception...

# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of this false teaching
  1. It was a philosophy
  2. It placed much emphasis on ritual circumcision, dietary laws, and the observance of holy days

# The Occasion for Writing



- ✧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching. **Colossians 2:11** and in Him you were also **circumcised** with a
- ✧ Evidence of circumcision made without hands, in the removal of the body of the flesh
  - 1. by the circumcision of Christ;
  - 2. **Colossians 2:14** having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of **decrees** against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross.
- Colossians 2:16** Therefore no one is to act as your judge **in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day** —



# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of this false teaching
  1. It was a philosophy
  2. It placed much emphasis on ritual circumcision, dietary laws, and the observance of holy days
  3. It affirmed that the mysterious powers involved in creation and salvation must be appeased and worshipped

# The Occasion for Writing



✧ Ep  
of f

✧ Evi

1.

2.

3.

**Colossians 2:15** When He had disarmed the **rulers and authorities**, He made a public display of them, having triumphed over them through Him.

**Colossians 2:18** Let no one keep defrauding you of your prize by delighting in self-abasement and the **worship of the angels**, taking his stand on visions he has seen, inflated without cause by his fleshly mind,

**Colossians 2:19** and **not holding fast to the head**, from whom the entire body, being supplied and held together by the joints and ligaments, grows with a growth which is from God.

# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of this false teaching
  1. It was a philosophy
  2. It placed much emphasis on ritual circumcision, dietary laws, and the observance of holy days
  3. It affirmed that the mysterious powers involved in creation and salvation must be appeased and worshipped
  4. It involved asceticism



# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of this false teaching
  1. **Colossians 2:20–23** <sup>20</sup>If you have died with Christ to the elementary principles of the world, **why**, as if you were living in the world, **do you submit yourself to decrees, such as,** <sup>21</sup>**“Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch!”** ... —in accordance with the commandments and teachings of men? <sup>23</sup>These are matters which have, to be sure, the appearance of wisdom in self-made religion and **self-abasement** and **severe treatment of the body**, but are of no value against fleshly indulgence.
  - 2.
  - 3.
  - 4.

# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of the false teaching
  1. It was a philosophy
  2. It placed much emphasis on ritual circumcision, dietary laws, and the observance of holy days
  3. It affirmed that the mysterious powers involved in creation and salvation must be appeased and worshipped
  4. It involved asceticism
  5. It involved those who claimed to be Christian teachers

# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of the false teaching
- ❧ Elements of the false teaching
  - ❧ Jewish element
  - ❧ Pagan elements
  - ❧ Christian elements



# The Occasion for Writing



- ❧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
- ❧ Evidence and leading features of the false teaching
- ❧ Elements of the false teaching
- ❧ Fortunately, the false teachers had, so far, not fully been successful

# The Occasion for Writing



- ✧ Epaphras had arrived in Rome, bringing disturbing news to Paul of the threat of false teaching in Colossae
  - ✧ Evidence and leading features of the false teaching
  - ✧ Elements of the true teaching
  - ✧ For the sake of the church in Colossae
- Colossians 1:3–5** <sup>3</sup>We give thanks to God..., <sup>4</sup>since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love which you have for all the saints; <sup>5</sup>because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel

**Colossians 2:5** For even though I am absent in body, nevertheless I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good discipline and the stability of your faith in Christ.

# The Purpose for Writing



1. To express his personal interest in the church
2. To warn them against reverting to their old pagan vices
3. To refute the false teaching that was threatening the Colossian church\*



# The Theme of Colossians



## *The all-sufficiency of Christ*

**Christ** is God's Son

**Christ** is the object of the Christian's faith

**Christ** is Redeemer

**Christ** is the Image of God

**Christ** is Lord of creation

**Christ** is the Head of the church

**Christ** is Reconciler of the universe

In **Christ** dwells the fullness of the Godhead

**Christ** is Head over every power and authority in the universe

**Christ** is the essence of the mystery of God

In **Christ** are hidden all God's treasures and of wisdom and knowledge

**Christ** is the standard by which all religious teaching is to be measured

**Christ** is the reality of the truth foreshadowed by the regulations and rituals of the Old Covenant

**Christ** conquered the cosmic powers of evil by His cross

**Christ** was enthroned following His resurrection at the right hand of God

**Christ** will one day be revealed in glory

# The Need for Colossians Today

