

Colossians Introduction

Where was Paul writing to?
When?
Why?
Who delivered it?
What did they do with it?





The unexcavated site of Colossae sits near the modern city of Honaz at the base of Mt. Cadmus (in modern Turkey). Photo: Courtesy of Alan H. Cadwallader.



Pamukkale is Turkey's famous white "cotton castle" with natural mineral basins and bright blue pools.

Aegean Sea

Paul spent 3 years here
Ephesus

120 Miles (190 km) Colossae to Ephesus

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Hierapolis
(Pamukkale)

Laodicea
(Curuksu)

There's no record
Paul ever came here

Colossae



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Population

Major trade route – mixed
Native locals Phrygians & Greeks
Jews
Roman province of Asia



Mix of religions

Animism & superstition (fear of spirit world)
Astrology – eastern visitor influence
Greek & Roman gods
Mystery religions - later gnostics
(secret societies)
Judaism – modified by speculation
Christianity



How did Christianity get there?

Paul never came there (no mention in Acts)

Colossians 2:1 I want you to know how hard I am contending for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally.

But Epaphras came to Ephesus and then went home

Colossians 1:7 You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf,



Where did Paul write it ?

From prison

- associate Timothy
as secretary



Most likely in Rome during his first imprisonment there

Acts 28:30 For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him.

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

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

When did Paul write it ?

About AD 62

Before his release and re-arrest and martyrdom (AD 64-7)



Why did Paul write it?

In response to information from Epaphras



Good news

Colossians 1:8 and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

And concerns (Our enemy at work)

What were the problems?

False teaching → wrong behaviour

(wrong views of God and Jesus were circulating)

Colossians 2:8 See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces of this world rather than on Christ.

Who delivered it?

Tychicus + Onesimus

Colossians 4:7,9 Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

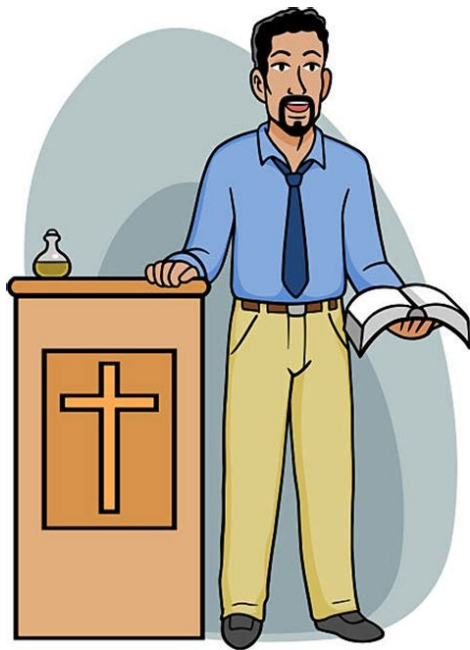


What did they do with it?

They gathered the church in home(s) and read it aloud?

Passed it on to other churches

Colossians 4:16 After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.



What did they do with it?

Made copies?

Similar to our situation:

A Church in the world, no more original apostles.

But we have God's provision for life and witness – the Scriptures



2 Timothy 3:16-17 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

