

# Colossians

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## A. Authorship of Colossians

1. Pauline authorship not seriously questioned until the 19th century.

2. Arguments for Pauline authorship:

a. External evidence: accepted by early church.

b. Internal evidence:

1. 1:1 says Paul is author

2. 4:18 (concl.) is typically Pauline

### **3. Arguments against Pauline authorship (all internal evidence):**

**a. language & style are un-Pauline.**

**1. many hapax legomena (word used only once in NT).**

**a. But other Pauline letters have some, too.**

**2. Stylistic differences**

b. A difference in theology from Pauline writings.

1. Absence of such doctrines as justification, salvation, righteousness.

a. Must a writer discuss all of his typical themes each time?

c. The similarities between Colossians & Ephesians are suspicious

1. Would one person write such similar letters?

a. Yet, why could Paul not be allowed to repeat himself on two different occasions?

## B. Setting:

1. Paul had probably **not** visited this church yet (2:1).
2. Timothy & **Epaphras** (1:7) probably evangelized Colossians during Paul's long stay in Ephesus (Acts 19:10; Col. 4:13).
3. The church was probably primarily **Gentiles** (Col. 1:27; 2:13).
4. When Paul wrote this church Archippus was probably in charge of it (4:17)
5. **Tychicus** probably carried this letter to Colossae (implied in 4:7-8).

## C. The City of Colossae

1. In southwest Asia Minor, 100 miles east of Ephesus.
2. Hieropolis and Laodicea, both in the Lycus River valley, were near Colossae.
3. Colossae was important during the Greek period. However, by Paul's day its importance was diminished due to the destruction of several earthquakes.
  - a. Colossae was the least important city to which Paul wrote a letter in the NT (Lea, p. 456).

**D. Date - Traditional dating: Paul probably wrote Colossians in the early 60s, near the end of his Roman imprisonment.**

**1. Paul hoped for an early release**

**2. The time necessary for his companions to join him in Rome fit well**

**E. Themes:**

**1. to combat false teachings about Christ**

**a. The heresy: a mix between unorthodox Judaism & incipient gnosticism.**

**2. to give encouragement in the Christian life**