

New Testament Survey

Class 17: Colossians

Author and Date:

- The apostle Paul, c. 62 AD, assuming his Roman imprisonment is in view in Col 4:3, 18.
- Disputes about Paul’s authorship are based on self-referential arguments regarding differences in writing style and theology from his “undisputed” letters. While not to be underestimated, these arguments are not compelling.

The Church in Colossae:

- Probably planted sometime after 52 AD
- Paul spent three years (52-55 AD) in Ephesus (~100 miles east of Colossae) and it is assumed that during this time Epaphras (1:7-8; 4:12-23) was converted and brought the gospel back to Colossae

Verbal Similarities between Colossians and Ephesians

- The “mystery” of Christ (Col 1:26ff / Eph 3:3ff)
- The so-called household code (Col 3:18-4:1 / Eph 5:22-6:9)
- Former alienation before faith in Christ (Col 1:21 / Eph 2:12)
- Autobiographical note on Paul’s ministry (Col 1:24-29 / Eph 3:7-13)
- Christ as head of the church (Col 1:18; 2:19 / Eph 1:22; 4:15)
- Put off old self; put on new self (Col 3:9ff / Eph 4:22ff)
- Psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs (Col 3:16 / Eph 5:19)
- Prayer request for Paul’s evangelism (Col 4:3-4 / Eph 6:19-20)
- Tychicus bringing updates (Col 4:7 / Eph 6:21)

14-Jan-24	Colossians
21-Jan-24	1 Thessalonians
28-Jan-24	2 Thessalonians
4-Feb-24	Intro to the Pastoral Epistles
11-Feb-24	1 Timothy
18-Feb-24	2 Timothy
25-Feb-24	Titus

Outline

Greeting and Thanksgiving (1:1-8)

Exhortation to Continue in the Gospel as Originally Taught and to Resist Human Traditions that Have an Attractive Veneer of Wisdom (2:6-23)

Paul's Prayer for Spiritual Maturity (1:9-14)

- A model for our own prayers!

Set Your Mind on Heavenly Things and Embrace the New Way of Living that Reflects Christ (3:1-17)

The Son is Preeminent (1:15-23)

- “Firstborn” is not a reference to birth order, but to the legal rights of an heir and the privileges of the one who receives the throne (cf. Ps 89:27, also Exodus 4:22, etc.)
- The emphasis on Christ's supremacy hints at the false teaching which apparently diminishes Christ in some way (e.g., 2:18-19)

Expectations for Christians in their Household (3:18-4:1)

Prayer Requests and Evangelism (4:2-6)

Autobiographical Note on Ministry Methods and Goals (1:24-2:5)

- The first mention of the false teaching is in 2:4

Farewell Greetings from Christian Brothers and Sisters (4:7-18)

- Connections with the letter to Philemon: Onesimus (4:9) and Archippus (4:17) + five others mentioned in 4:10-14
- The breach with Mark has been reconciled (4:10 + Acts 15:36-41)!