

1. Author – “Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God...”

- There is some doubt in scholarly circles concerning Paul’s authorship.
- But three personal references [1:1, 23; 4:18], the unified testimony of the early church plus other factors – like the historical link to Philemon! – point to Pauline authorship.

2. Date – probably 60-61 A.D. during first Roman imprisonment [4:3, 10, 18]

- The other prison letters are Ephesians, Philippians and Philemon.
- Major earthquake destroyed Colossae in 61 A.D. – Colossians probably written previous.

3. Destination – “To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ in Colossae...” [1:2]

- Colossae was a relatively “unimportant” Asian city of the Lycus Valley – 100 miles east of Ephesus – much closer to the more prominent Hierapolis and Laodicea [4:13]
- Paul apparently never visited Colossae [2:1 – “...have not seen my face in the flesh...”].
- The Colossian church was probably planted by Epaphras. He heard about Jesus from Paul in Ephesus [Acts 19:10] – then returned to Colossae and spread the good news [1:7, 4:12].

4. Purpose – “to counteract false teaching concerning the absolute sufficiency of Jesus Christ.”

- False teachers peddled human philosophy and tradition [2:8-10], food, drink and special religious days [2:16-17], worship of angels [2:18-19], etc. in a Jewish/Greek syncretistic spiritual cocktail – over against the supremacy of Jesus.
- Paul responds with the most lofty, concentrated language about Jesus as Lord in NT!!
 - Note – 1:14-21, 2:1-23, 3:1-11 – “There is only Christ – that is all...!” [Jerusalem Bible]

5. Brief outline

- The absolute Lordship of Christ [1-2]
- Living under the Lordship of Christ [3-4]

6. Text of the morning [3:1-11]

- 3:3, 4 – “Our life is hidden with Christ, in God...Christ is our life...”
- 3:5, 9 – “Therefore...do not lie to one another...”

Quote: The church must become a place where “individuals can speak the terrible truths they harbor about themselves.”