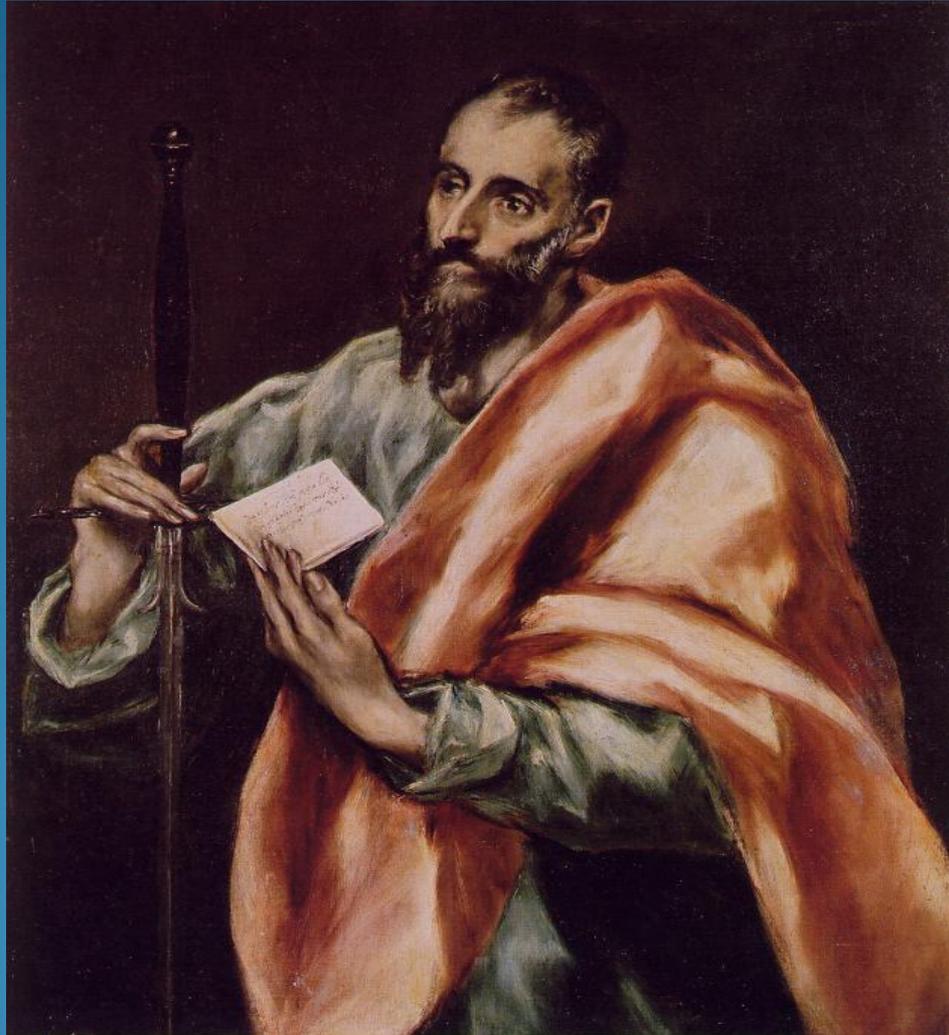


the epistle of Colossians



Background

- This epistle is one of the four epistles St. Paul sent from the prison. The other three are Ephesians, Philippians, and Philemon.

The Time of the epistle

About 61 -63 AD while St. Paul was in his first captivity at Rome.

The Main Theme:

- To defend the faith in Jesus Christ as the only Savior against the heresy found in the Church. Jesus is the preeminent, first and foremost in every thing. It is the most “CHRIST” centered epistle in the NT.

The Colossian heresy:(Col. 2:8-23)

- It was a religious system that combined:
- **Gnostic ideas:** (Gnostic =knowledge) -
- Human wisdom is more important than faith in Christ.
- Elementary principles or creatures which are between God and man . Jesus Christ was considered one among many of them. So, Jesus is a savior among many saviors.
- **Greek speculations** Philosophy and traditions of man to be added to the faith.
- **Jewish legalism** Traditions as circumcision , food , drink , festivals of new moon , or Sabbath to be practiced .
- **Oriental mysticism** false humility , worship of Angels , regulations and doctrine of man , and self imposed religion .

The city of Colossi

- Colossi was a city in the Roman province of Asia about 100 miles east of Ephesus. It was found in the 5th. century BC. At that time , it was an important trading center . But , at the time of St. Paul , the status of the city declined and it became a small city. The neighboring two cities LAODICIA and HIERAPOLIS became more important as trading centers. The city was abandoned in the 8th. century AD . Now the only mark of the ancient city is a mound of dirt and rubbles.

The Church of Colossi:

- + Most probably established by Epaphras as it is evident from the epistle *“as you also learned from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on your behalf,” (Col. 1:7) , “Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God.” (Col. 4:12) . St. Paul did not visit the Church “For I want you to know what a great conflict I have for you and those in Laodicea, and for as many as have not seen my face in the flesh,” (Col.2:1)*

+ *Epaphras* :

- Probably a native of Colossi who started the Church at Colossi ,Laodicea , and Hierapolis as it is understood from this verse *“For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. (Col. 4:13) ..* The timing was while St. Paul was in his 3rd. mission preaching at Ephesus (Refer to Acts 19:10 , 20:31)
- Probably he visited St. Paul at his prison in Rome to seek his apostolic guidance concerning the heresy in the Church.

+ *Philemon* :

- A resident in Colossi , converted by St. Paul . He was a member in the Church and her largest financial supporter, who opened his home for the meetings of the Church..

+ *Archippus* :

- Philemon's son (refer to Phil. 2)and had a post in the service of the Church at Colosse.

Outline of the epistle

- *Introduction* ***1:1-14***
- Greeting 1:1-2
- Thanksgiving for the Colossians growth 1:3-8
- Prayer for continued growth and victory 1:9-14

Apostolic Christology

- Christ is supreme overall 1:15 -
2:3
- Christ is sufficient for our spiritual progress 2:4 -
2:23
- when we walk in Him 2:4 -2:7
- Through His crucifixion, and resurrection but not through
- “vain philosophy” and people traditions 2:8 -2:15
- Through holding fast to the Head , but not through
- the Jewish traditions and oriental mysticism 2:16-
2:19
- Through practicing death with Him , but not through abiding
- by the traditions of the other religions 2:20 -
2:23

The fruits of union with the risen Christ

3:1 -4:6

- Seeking heavenly things 3:1 -3:4
- putting off the old sinful passion 3:5 -3:11
- putting on new righteous virtues 3:12 -3:14
- dwelling of the Word of God inside us ,and praising 3:15 - 3:17
- Christian family relations (husbands , wives , children)
3:18 -3:20
- Christian work relations (masters and slaves)
3:22 -4:1
- Christian behavior towards others
4:1 -4:6

Conclusion

4:7 -4:18

- commendations 4:7 - 4:9
- greetings 4:10 - 4:14
- instructions 4:15 -4:18