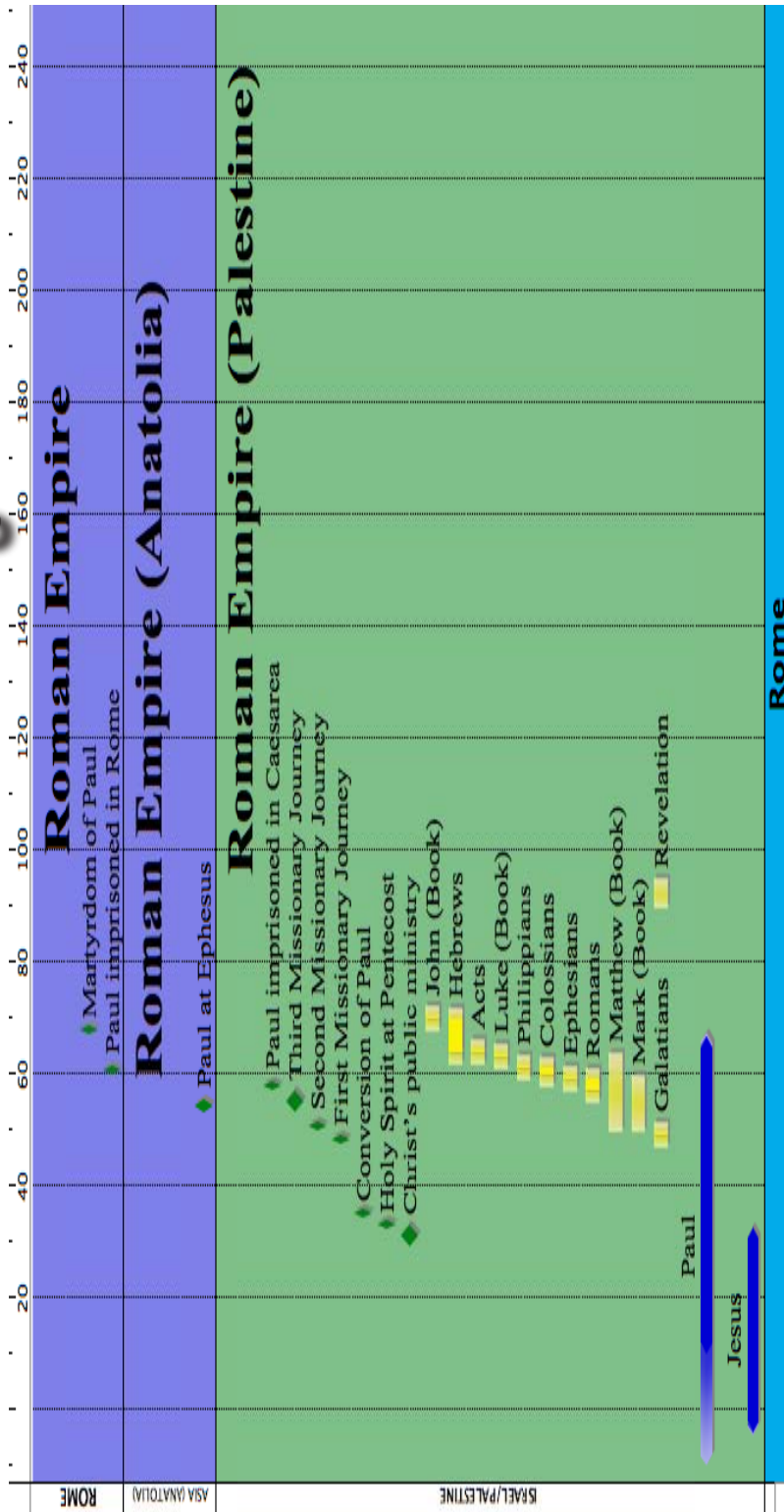


Abbreviated Timeline/Writing Of Colossians



Grace & Peace To You

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 24th, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

TO THE SAINTS AND FAITHFUL BRETHREN IN CHRIST WHO ARE AT COLOSSAE: GRACE TO YOU AND PEACE FROM GOD OUR FATHER. WE GIVE THANKS TO GOD, THE FATHER OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST, PRAYING ALWAYS FOR YOU...
~COLOSSIANS 1:2-3 (NASB)

1) The Colossian Context

- The church at Colossae was established as part of the broad evangelistic activity of the Apostle Paul's third missionary journey (Acts 18:23-19:14).
- During the third missionary journey, when "all who lived in Asia heard the word of the Lord" (Acts 19:10), Epaphras, a Colossian (Colossians 4:12a) was converted and probably jailed with the Apostle Paul (cf. Philemon 23).
- After this imprisonment, Epaphras brought the great news of the Gospel to Colossae, establishing the Colossian church to which Paul writes this letter (Colossians 1:7).

D) Some years later, Epaphras is among the Apostle's Paul's associates* (probably during Paul's Roman imprisonment, cf. Acts 28:30-31) and informs him of the "Colossian Heresy."

E) Paul, with the assistance of Timothy (who would become the leader of the regional church in Ephesus, cf. 1st Timothy 1:3) pens the letter to the Colossian church (Colossians 1:1) in response to Epaphras' report of the Colossian Heresy.

2) Grace Has Brought Us Together

A) Paul addresses his letter, in typical fashion (cf. you can find similar greetings in Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, 1st & 2nd Thessalonians, etc.), noting his authoritative role as an "apostle of Jesus Christ" (Colossians 1:1), despite never having visited Colossae personally (2:1)

B) Note that Paul does not overtly refer to the Colossians as a "church." This is probably an indicator that the church in Colossae was still very young and lacking a firm established presence (contrasted with Laodicea, 4:15).

C) Paul blesses the Colossians with "grace" (1:2) from God. Grace is Paul's most eloquent theological expression which describes the Gospel ("Good News," cf. Romans 3:23-24). Paul leads with grace, a clear emphasis on God's free and unearned gift of Jesus Christ (Ephesians 2:8-9).

* Tychicus, the deliverer of the letter to the Colossians, is also amongst this company of associates which worked for the cause of the Gospel with the Apostle Paul. Tychicus also delivered Paul's letter to the Ephesians (cf. Ephesians 6:21-22).

D) Grace also carried special meaning in Paul's writings as an encouragement to stand firm under affliction (Acts 20:32), a confidence which came from a relationship with Christ and functioned to help those who are weak to stand strong.

3) Peace Has Resulted From Grace

A) Paul also blesses the Colossians with "peace from God" (1:2), hearkening the reader back to the Older Testament greeting of "shalom," or "peace be with you."

B) However, Paul's "shalom" is not simply a wish for personal well-being, but "peace from God." In other words, Paul is reminding the Colossians that out of grace has flowed the remarkable relationship of peace with God.

C) Paul wishes "grace and peace" to the Colossians as both a reminder of God's work in their lives, and as a reminder of their relationship as followers of Christ to each other.

4) All Those "In Christ" Are Part Of Our Family

A) Paul also spells out a "family" theology by tracing his own relationship to Jesus Christ (as an apostle, 1:1), and Timothy's relationship to him as "our brother."

B) Paul includes the Colossians as "brethren" (brothers, 1:2) of Timothy, himself, and a part of the family whose head is Jesus Christ (cf. 1:18). Paul's blessing is grace & peace, expressed most vividly in the family of those who are in Christ.



THE THIRD MISSIONARY JOURNEY OF PAUL
ACTS 18:23-19:14

- City
- Site of the Seven Churches of Asia
- ▲ Mountain peak
- Roads
- Pass
- Paul's routes

121

The Apostle Paul's third missionary journey centered in Ephesus, where he stayed for more than two years. Epaphras, who brought the gospel back to his hometown of Colossae, was probably imprisoned with Paul in Ephesus. Collected from various sources, esp. *Paul, Apostle of the Heart Set Free*, by F.F. Bruce, ©1977, Eerdmans Publishing, Pages 407-408. Illustration is from the Holman Bible Atlas, ©1998, Broadman & Holman Publishers, Map #121, Page 249.



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Felix, the Roman procurator in Caesarea Maritima, kept the Apostle Paul imprisoned for two years in sent Paul to Rome (at Paul's appeal) to appear before Caesar (a legal right of Roman citizens). Paul's shipwreck which landed the crew in Malta, just South of Sicily. Paul would eventually be prosecuted Nero. Collected from various resources, esp. *Paul*, by Hans Dieter Betz from the Anchor Bible Dictionary *the Heart Set Free*, by F.F. Bruce, ©1977, Eerdmans Publishing, Pages 376. Illustration is from the Holman

Herod's praetorium. Felix allowed Paul some freedom, but eventually Felix voyage through the Mediterranean Sea was eventful, even resulting in a and killed for the faith under the persecution of the Roman Caesar, Emperor (Volume 5). ©1992, Doubleday Publishing, Pages 186-201; *Paul*, Apostle of Bible Atlas, ©1998, Broadman & Holman Publishers, Map #123, Page 256.



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