

About Colossians:

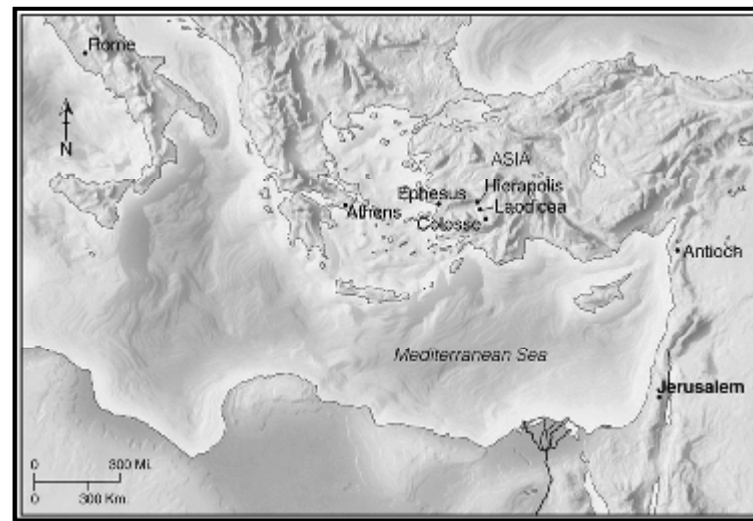
- One of Paul's prison epistles (letters)
- Written around A.D. 60-61 (the same year that the city was nearly destroyed by an earthquake)
- Written to a church not founded by Paul
- Churches at Colossae, Laodicea, & Hierapolis possibly founded by Epaphras, a disciple of Paul

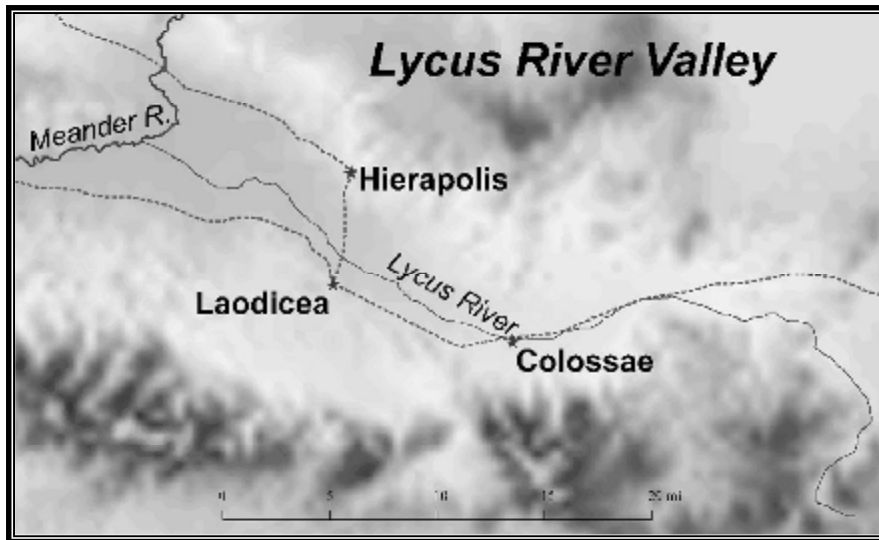
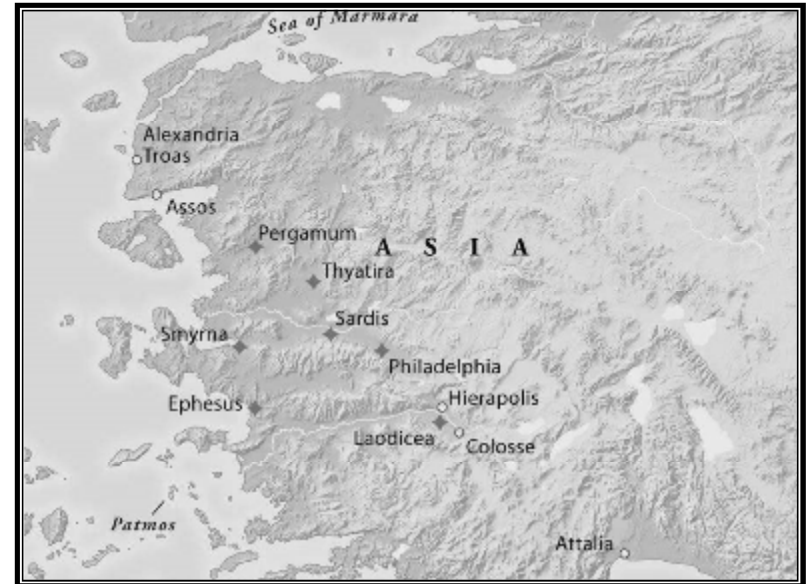
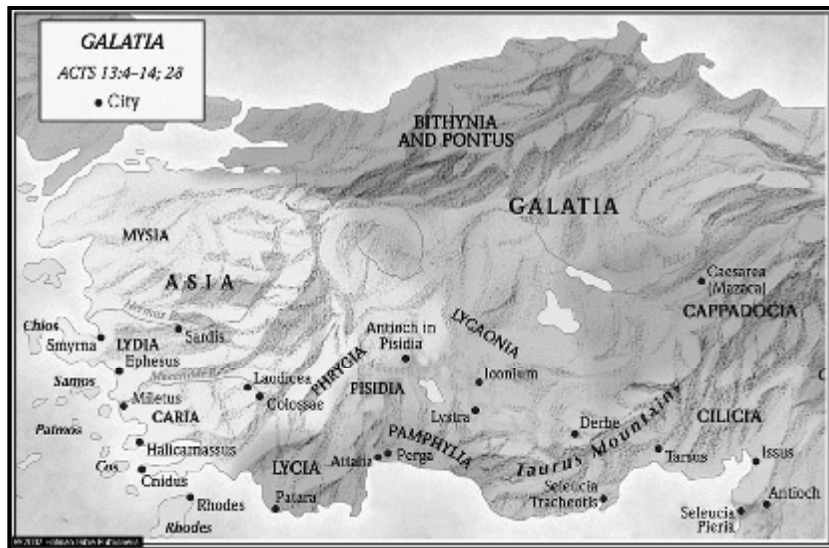
Colossians 1:3, 5, 7-8

- Paul says to the Colossians: we give thanks and pray for you (v.3)
- "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel . . .
- just as you learned it from **Epaphras**, our beloved fellow bond-servant, who is a faithful servant of Christ on our behalf.
- and he also informed us of your love in the Spirit."

Colossians 4:12-13

- **Epaphras**, who is one of your number, a bonds slave of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.
- For I testify for him that he has a deep concern for you and for those who are in Laodicea and Hierapolis.





Colossae (unexcavated mound)



Main Street of Laodicea



Theater at Hierapolis



Limestone Formations, Hierapolis



Why did Paul write to the Colossians?

- To express his personal interest in them & encourage them
- To teach them how to grow spiritually
- To correct false teaching

The False Teaching

- Had a Jewish element (legalism, ritualism, holy days)
- Had a pagan element (early form of Gnosticism)

Gnosticism (an early version)

- Salvation through knowledge, not faith (Gk. *Gnosis* = knowledge)
 - § Knowledge from mystical experience (not intellectual)
 - § Occult knowledge (astrology, magic)
 - § Esoteric knowledge (way to feel superior to others, available only to the initiated)

Gnosticism (an early version)

- Belief that matter is evil & God would have nothing to do with it
 - § Led to asceticism (mistreating the body) among some
 - § Led to libertinism (only the soul is important; the body can do as it wishes) among others

Gnosticism (an early version)

- Belief in intermediate beings (aeons or emanations, offshoots of deity) to be worshipped and appeased
 - § A way to distance God from evil matter
 - § Jesus is only one of these aeons.
 - § Jesus is not literally both God and man (false doctrine).

GOD
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AEON
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AEON
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AEON
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CREATED THE WORLD

The False Teaching

- Had a Jewish element (legalism, ritualism, holy days)
- Had a pagan element (early form of Gnosticism)
- Had a Christian element (It wore a Christian mask. “It did not *deny* Christ, but it did *dethrone* him.”)

~Curtis Vaughan, *Expositor's Bible Commentary*

The True Teaching

- Paul opposed falsehood with truth.
- Jesus is “the image of the invisible God” (1:15).
- He is the Creator (1:16).
- He is the Redeemer (1:20).
- In Him “are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (2:3).

Reasons to Study Colossians

- To know Jesus better
- To grow spiritually
- To be blessed

