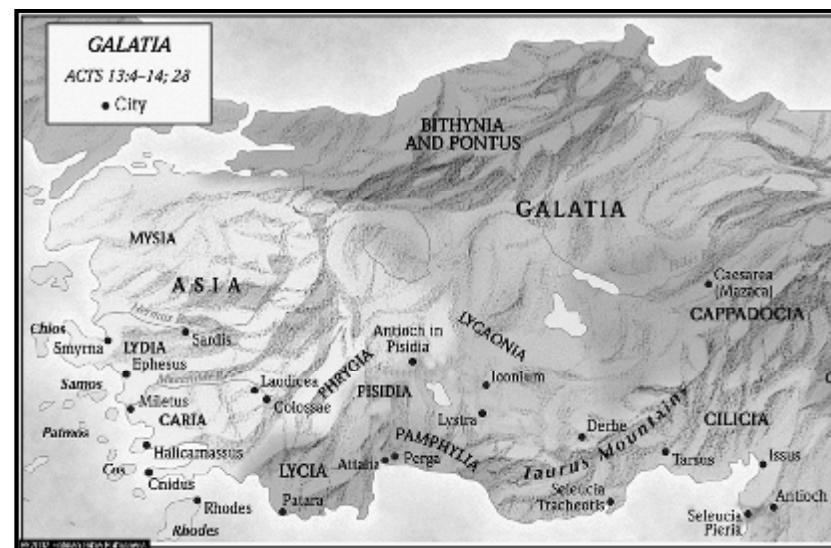


About Colossians:

- 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



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)
- 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).

Colossians 1 Overview

- Paul’s Greeting (1.1-2)
- Paul’s Thanksgiving (1.3-8)
- Paul’s Prayer (1.9-12)
- The Superiority of Christ (1.13-20)
- The Salvation of the Colossians (1.21-23)
- The Ministry of Paul (1.24-29)

Paul’s Greeting (1.1)

- Paul is an apostle of Jesus Christ
 - § Has authority
 - § Represents Christ
 - § Appointed by God
- Timothy is closely related to Paul
 - § Also greets the Colossians
 - § A brother, not an apostle

Paul’s Greeting (1.2)

- Saints
 - § Those set apart to glorify God
 - § Believers (“faithful” & “in Christ”)
- God is the source of
 - § Grace—unmerited favor
 - § Peace—“quietness of spirit that transcends circumstances” (*GotQuestions.org*).

Paul's Thanksgiving (1.3-8)

- For their faith (1.4)
- For their love (1.4)
- For their hope (1.5)
- Resulting from their hearing
 - § The word of truth
 - § The gospel (good news)

Paul's Prayer (1.9-14)

He wanted them to

- know God's will (v.9)
- have spiritual wisdom & understanding
- please & honor the Lord with their lives (v.10)
- bear spiritual fruit in every activity (v.10)
- know God better and better (v.10)

Paul's Prayer (1.9-12)

He wanted them to

- have God's power at work in them
 - § to strengthen them (v.11)
 - § to enable them to be firm in their faith and patient (v.11)
- be thankful (v.12)
- be aware that God has given them a glorious inheritance (v.12)

The Superiority of Christ (1.13-20)

- Rescuer (v.13)
- Redeemer (v.14)
- The One Who forgives (v.14)
- The Lord of Creation (1:15-17)
- The Lord of Redemption—the New Creation (1:18-20)

The Lord of Creation

- The Image of the invisible God (v.15)
Jn.14.9—Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.”
- The Firstborn of all creation (v.15)

Firstborn

- Ex. 4.22—Thus says the LORD, “Israel is My son, My firstborn.” Jacob was younger than Esau, his brother, but given higher rank.
- Jn 1:1,14—“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us.”

The Lord of Creation

- The Image of the invisible God (v.15)
- The Firstborn of all creation (v.15)
- The Creator of all in heaven & on earth (v.16)
- The One to be glorified by all (v.16)
- The Supreme One in position & time (v.17)
- The Sustainer of all (v.17)

The Lord of Redemption

- The Head of the Church (v.18)
- The Origin of the Church (v.18)
- The Firstborn from the dead (v.18)
- The First in everything (v.18)
- Fully God & fully Man (v.19)
- The Reconciler (v.20)

Verse 23

- Better translation: “assuming that you continue” (Paul expected them to remain faithful.) No hint here that they could lose their salvation. Genuine believers will continue.
- “Wherever the gospel has been preached, it is this gospel which has been proclaimed; there is no other” (NAC).

Verse 24

- The word used for “afflictions” is never used to refer to Jesus’ suffering on the cross.
- Jesus said, “It is finished” (Jn.19.30) – nothing lacking in His work on the cross.
- John 15:20—Jesus said, “Remember the word that I said to you, ‘A slave is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you.”

Verse 24

- Acts 9:4— Jesus said, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?”— Jesus considered what Saul was doing to His people to be persecuting Jesus Himself.
- Paul suffered much opposition from both Jews & Gentiles as he preached the gospel. In that sense he was suffering for Christ.

Final Thoughts:

- Let’s follow Paul’s example in praying (1) constantly, (2) with thanksgiving, (3) specifically, (4) with primary focus on spiritual needs.
- Let’s meditate on and praise God for what we’ve learned about Jesus as Lord of Creation & Redemption.
- Let’s be sure that we’ve been reconciled to God.