

INTRODUCTION TO THE COLOSSIANS

Written about A.D. 61-63.

Colossians has been called the twin epistle of Ephesians. Written at about the same time, the content of these two letters is very similar. Timothy was associated with Paul in Rome in the writing of these two epistles while Paul was a prisoner. Tychicus was the bearer of this letter to the Colossians. ¹

The city of Colosse was located about 100 miles east of Ephesus in the Lycus valley near Hieropolis and Laodicea (4:13). Apparently Paul had not been there (2:1), but this area may have been evangelized while Paul was in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) by Epaphras (1:7), Timothy, or others. ¹

The occasion for this letter was the news brought to Paul by Epaphras. Apparently Gnosticism, a fusion of religion and philosophy which taught that matter is evil and spirit is good, was modifying the Gospel message to a point of danger. Over against this Paul sets forth his Christology, emphasizing the preeminence of Christ. He also warns against the danger of legalism, reflecting the influence of Judaizers on the Colossians. The Judaizers held to strict rules about the kinds of permissible food and drink, religious feast days, and

1. The Amplified Bible, p. 1388)

circumcision. Paul responds to these heresies by exalting Christ, demonstrating His complete adequacy as contrasted with the emptiness of mere human philosophy. Paul is concerned that ethical demands and intellectual standards should be properly integrated in the pattern of Christian living. ¹

1. Amplified Bible, p. 1389.