

Colossians - Chapter 1

Colossians 1:1-2 – “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the saints and faithful brothers in Christ at Colossae: Grace to you and peace from God our Father.”

3972 [e]	652 [e]	5547 [e]	2424 [e]	1223 [e]	2307 [e]	2316 [e]	2532 [e]	5095 [e]	3588 [e]	80 [e]
Paulos	apostolos	Christou	Iēsou	dia	thelēmatos	Theou	kai	Timotheos	ho	adelphos
1 Παῦλος	ἀπόστολος	Χριστοῦ	Ἰησοῦ	διὰ	θελήματος	Θεοῦ	, καὶ	Τιμόθεος	ὁ	ἀδελφὸς ,
Paul	an apostle	of Christ	Jesus	by	[the] will	of God	and	Timothy	the	brother
N-NMS	N-NMS	N-GMS	N-GMS	Prep	N-GNS	N-GMS	Conj	N-NMS	Art-NMS	N-NMS

3588 [e]	1722 [e]	2857 [e]	40 [e]	2532 [e]	4103 [e]	80 [e]	1722 [e]	5547 [e]	5485 [e]
Tois	en	Kolossais	hagiois	kai	pistois	adelphois	en	Christō	Charis
2 Τοῖς	ἐν	Κολοσσαῖς	ἁγίοις	καὶ	πιστοῖς	ἀδελφοῖς	ἐν	Χριστῷ	: Χάρις
To the	in	Colossae	saints	and	faithful	brothers	in	Christ	Grace
Art-DMP	Prep	N-DFP	Adj-DMP	Conj	Adj-DMP	N-DMP	Prep	N-DMS	N-NFS

4771 [e]	2532 [e]	1515 [e]	575 [e]	2316 [e]	3962 [e]	1473 [e]
hymin	kai	eirēnē	apo	Theou	Patros	hēmōn
ὑμῖν	καὶ	εἰρήνη	ἀπὸ	Θεοῦ	Πατρὸς	ἡμῶν .
to you	and	peace	from	God	[the] Father	of us
PPro-D2P	Conj	N-NFS	Prep	N-GMS	N-GMS	PPro-G1P

1. Greeting – None of Paul’s letters begin the same. This provides a clue concerning the content and attitude of the letter.
 - a. Paul uses “apostle” not because his authority is under attack like in Corinth and Galatia, but as credentials for the right to discern false teaching and doctrinal error they are dealing with.
 - b. Paul adds to authority in “the will of God” not self-appointment.
 - c. Timothy as “our brother” which seems to indicate a connection with Colossae, so Timothy’s name is used.
 - d. Dual Kingdoms is introduced in this Greeting and will be developed beginning in 1:13. But for now it is identified as:
 - i. believers living “in Colossae”
 - ii. while also being alive “in Christ.”
 - e. “Holy” means “set apart” for the work of God. They belong to the Lord while “in Colossae.”
 - f. “Faithful” describes the quality of their relationship with the Lord. They are proving to be faithful “in Colossae.”
 - g. “Grace” was common Greek greeting which meant “favor.” Paul uses it to refer to God’s favor offered to man.

- h. "Peace" (91x in NT) is the Greek word "*eirene*" (meaning, "one, peace, quietness, rest") used to express the Hebrew word "*shalom*" (250 x in OT). Means well-being, wholeness, total harmony and express the general Hebrew sense of the individual's welfare. This favor and wholeness are from God the Father, presented here as "God OUR Father."
2. In this greeting there is no specific problem hinted at.
 - a. Galatians - Consider the conflict in Galatians 1:1.
 - b. Corinthians - claim of authority, demand for holiness and conformity in 1 Cor. 1:1-3.
 - c. Romans - The embracing and presenting of the Gospel in Romans 1:1-3.
 - d. 1 Tim, 2 Tim, and Titus - their calling and teaching.
 - e. James 1:1, servant, Israel, Greetings.
 - f. 1 Peter, an apostle to the scattered, yet elect!
 - g. 2 Peter, an apostle who is a servant to those who have the same, similar, valuable faith as me...stay focused on the knowledge;
 - h. Jude, servant of Jesus, brother of James to those who are called, loved and kept. i. Revelation 1:4-8.
 3. Colossians is to be read to all the believers according to Colossians 4:16.
 4. Already in the greeting the need for a mystical experience or Merkabah vision for a full experience is rejected.
 - a. The "greeting" in Colossians 1:1-2 teaches that the believers have these things assured to them already:
 - i. An authoritative word from God... Paul is an "apostle"
 - ii. Leadership from God... Paul in "the will of God"
 - iii. A relationship with God...they are "saints"
 - iv. An allegiance to Christ...they are "faithful"
 - v. Addresses the Cultural tension...they are "in Christ" while "in Colossae"
 - vi. Affirmed relationship with God...they are "favored"
 - vii. Confirmed attainment...they are at "peace" (wholeness, total well-being) with God
 - viii. They are not alone, but belong...they are members of those who can say "our Father"
 5. Paul's greetings include:
 - a. writer,
 - b. identification of the writer,
 - c. associates,
 - d. recipients with description,
 - e. blessing

1:3-8 Thanksgiving for what the Gospel had done in Colossae. Not what people had done or ministry or application or counseling or programs or etc. (Exodus 18:15-23, 18:17 and 20, "What you are doing is not good...Teach them the decrees and laws, and show them the way to live and the duties they are to perform.")

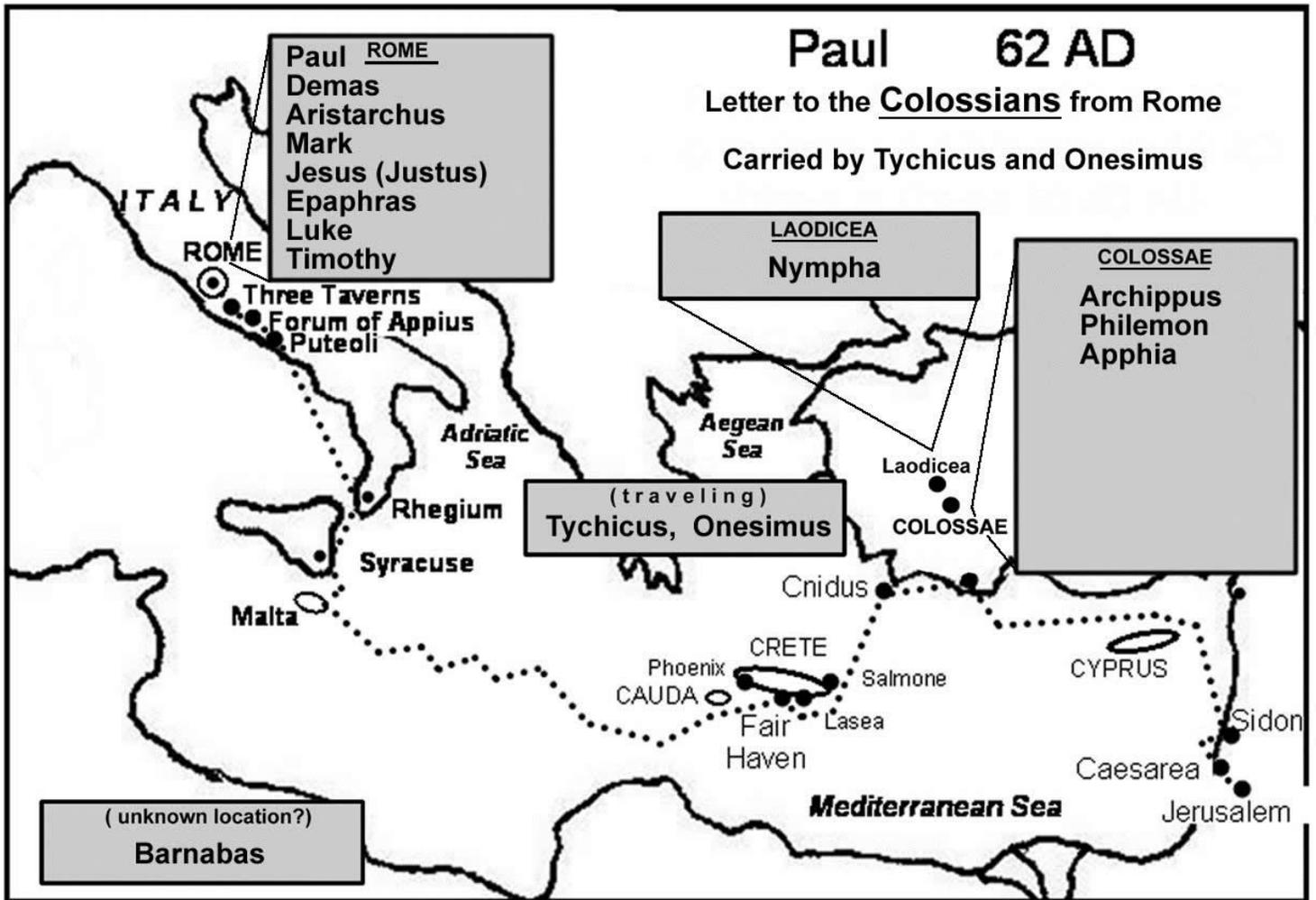
Merkabah Mysticism ○ “Merkabah” means

“heavenly chariot”

- This included a process of legal observances, ascetic practices, mystical experiences and the uses of “angels” (stoichea) to pass through the heavenlies and see vision of God as Ezekiel.
- This heavenly ascent is found in 1 Enoch 14:8-23 –

“¹The book of the words of righteousness, and of the reprimand of the eternal Watchers in accordance ² with the command of the Holy Great One in that vision. I saw in my sleep what I will now say with a tongue of flesh and with the breath of my mouth: which the Great One has given to men to ³ converse therewith and understand with the heart. As He has created and given to man the power of understanding the word of wisdom, so hath He created me also and given me the power of reprimanding ⁴ the Watchers, the children of heaven. I wrote out your petition, and in my vision it appeared thus, that your petition will not be granted unto you throughout all the days of eternity, and that judgement ⁵ has been finally passed upon you: yea (your petition) will not be granted unto you. And from henceforth you shall not ascend into heaven unto all eternity, and in bonds of the earth the decree ⁶ has gone forth to bind you for all the days of the world. And (that) previously you shall have seen the destruction of your beloved sons and ye shall have no pleasure in them, but they shall fall before⁷ you by the sword. And your petition on their behalf shall not be granted, nor yet on your own: even though you weep and pray and speak all the words contained in the writing which I have ⁸ written. And the vision was **shown to me** thus: Behold, in the vision **clouds invited me** and a **mist summoned me**, and the course of the stars and the lightnings sped and **hastened me**, and the winds in ⁹ the vision **caused me to fly** and **lifted me upward**, and **bore me into heaven**. And **I went in** till **I drew nigh** to a wall which is built of crystals and surrounded by tongues of fire: and it began to affright ¹⁰ me. And **I went into** the tongues of fire and drew nigh to a large house which was built of crystals: and the walls of the house were like a tesselated floor (made) of crystals, and its groundwork was ¹¹ of crystal. Its ceiling was like the path of the stars and the lightnings, and between them were ¹² fiery cherubim, and their heaven was (clear as) water. A flaming fire surrounded the walls, and its ¹³ portals blazed with fire. And **I entered into that house**, and it was hot as fire and cold as ice: there ¹⁴ were no delights of life therein: **fear covered me**, and **trembling got hold upon me**. And as **I quaked** ¹⁵ and trembled, **I fell upon my face**. And **I beheld a vision**, And lo! there was a second house, greater ¹⁶ than the former, and the entire portal stood open before me, and it was built of flames of fire. And in every respect it so excelled in splendour and magnificence and extent that **I cannot describe** to ¹⁷ you its splendour and its extent. And its floor was of fire, and above it were lightnings and the path ¹⁸ of the stars, and its ceiling also was flaming fire. And **I looked and saw** therein a lofty throne: its appearance was as crystal, and the wheels thereof as the shining sun, and there was the vision of ¹⁹ cherubim. And from underneath the throne came streams of flaming fire so that **I could not look** ²⁰ thereon. **And the Great Glory sat thereon**, and His raiment shone more brightly than the sun and ²¹ was whiter than any snow. **None of the angels could enter** and could behold His face by reason ²² of the magnificence and glory and no flesh could behold Him. The flaming fire was round about Him, and a great fire stood before Him, and none around could draw nigh Him: ten thousand times ²³ ten thousand (stood) before Him, yet He needed no counselor. And the most holy ones who were ²⁴ nigh to Him did not leave by night nor depart from Him. And until then I had been prostrate on my face, trembling: and the Lord called me with His own mouth, and said to me: 'Come hither, ²⁵ Enoch, and hear my word.' And one of the holy ones came to me and waked me, and He made me rise up and approach the door: and **I bowed my face downwards.**”

– 1 Enoch 14:8-23



Colossians 4:7-18

- Paul typically ended his letters greeting people and referring to those who were with him or would be traveling with the letter.
- Here Paul even greets those in nearby towns in the Lycus Valley
- These are not mere idle greetings, but seem to be strategic comments meant to send a message and provide some routine relationship maintenance.
- The closing of Colossians brings 12 people out of their historic past for us to view as contemporaries of this letter and situation its information was addressed to.
 1. Tychicus
 2. Onesimus
 3. Aristarchus
 4. Mark
 5. Barnabas
 6. Jesus (Justus)
 7. Epaphras



8. Luke
9. Demas
10. Nympha
11. Archippus
12. Paul
- PLUS -
13. Church of Laodicea
14. Church of Hierapolis
15. Church of Colossae

- Paul considered these people co-workers along with him.
- Archippus was the pastor left in charge of the church in Colossae (Col. 1:7) when Epaphras left to visit Paul and ask for some assistance concerning the issues in the church in Colossae addressed in this letter.
- Tradition hands down to us that Philemon, Apphia (his wife), Archippus (pastor, possibly the brother of Apphia or son of Apphia/Philemon) and their slave Onesimus were stoned to death during Nero's persecution in 68 AD.

4:7 Tychicus will tell you all about my activities. He is a beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord.

- Tychicus and Onesimus are the two people carrying the letter to the church of Colossae that met in Philemon's (and his wife Apphia) house where Epaphras had been serving as the pastor until he left for Rome to meet with Paul.
- Archippus was serving as the pastor in Colossae during Epaphras' absence.
- Tychicus and Onesimus are to:
 - Carry and deliver (read) the letter
 - Report all about Paul's activities (4:7)
 - Deliver an oral report concerning Paul and his team in Rome (4:8) which included: Paul, Timothy, Tychicus, Onesimus, Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus (Justus)
 - To encourage the hearts of the Colossians (4:8)
 - Report everything that has taken place in Rome (4:9)
- See the similar Ephesians 6:21-22, "*So that you also may know how I am and what I am doing, Tychicus the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord will tell you everything. I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are, and that he may encourage your hearts.*"
- Tychicus was a native of the province of Asia. Tychicus is a common name found on inscriptions from this time period in Asia.
 - Acts 20:4, Tychicus was with Paul in Greece. In Acts 20:1 Paul leaves Ephesus for Macedonia where he meets Titus on his way back from Corinth.
 - Paul was visited in Ephesus by a Corinthian delegation and responded by writing 1 Corinthians probably during Acts 19:21-22 when he sent Timothy and Erastus (a Corinthian) to Corinth in Achaia with the letter of First Corinthians (1 Corinthians 16:10).
 - The conflict in Corinth continued so Paul visited Corinth from Ephesus (likely crossing over by sea) 2 Cor. 2:1
 - Paul followed that visit with a very harsh letter called "the painful letter" (2 Cor. 2:1-4) that he at first regretted having written and sent, but since it produced results, he was ultimately pleased that he wrote and sent it (2 Cor. 7:8-9)
 - Timothy returns to Ephesus apparently defeated by the Corinthians so Paul sends Titus with a third letter to Corinth (2 Cor. 7:

- Paul leaves Ephesus for Macedonia intending to visit Corinth (Acts 20:1). There Paul meets Titus who gives a good report concerning the Corinthians (2 Cor. 7:6; 8:16-24)
- Paul writes 2 Corinthians from Macedonia before he goes to Corinth in Acts 20:2.
- Paul then returned to Macedonia for 3 months but fled because of a Jewish assassination plot. (Acts 20:3)
- Tychicus and a group of six other men traveled with Paul and went ahead of him to Troas as Paul avoided the Jewish assassination trap. (Acts 20:4-6)
- Tychicus may have continued on with Paul to Jerusalem or he may have stopped in Asia on the way through.
- 2 Timothy 4:12, Paul sends Tychicus to Ephesus during his second and fatal imprisonment in
- Titus 3:12, Paul sent Tychicus or Artemas to relieve Titus in Crete in order that Titus could meet Paul in Nicopolis.
- Tychicus is describe in three ways by Paul:
 - A beloved brother – indicating spiritual family and affection
 - Faithful minister – indicating his quality of functioning in the body. The office or gift is not identified
 - Fellow servant (*doulos*, slave) – indicating service for Christ the Master.

4:8 I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know how we are and that he may encourage your hearts,

4:9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will tell you of everything that has taken place here.

- Onesimus is assumed to be the run-away slave of Philemon for several reason including context and historical tradition.
- Onesimus was a very common name for slaves since in meant “useful.”
- Onesimus is described in three ways:
 - Faithful –
 - Beloved brother – indicating he was a believer
 - One of you – indication he was a native of Colossae (doubtful since he was a slave and probably some kind of a foreigner) or was now one of the members of the house of believers

4:10-11 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, and Mark the cousin of Barnabas (concerning whom you have received instructions—if he comes to you, welcome him), and Jesus who is called Justus. These are the only men of the circumcision among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have been a comfort to me.

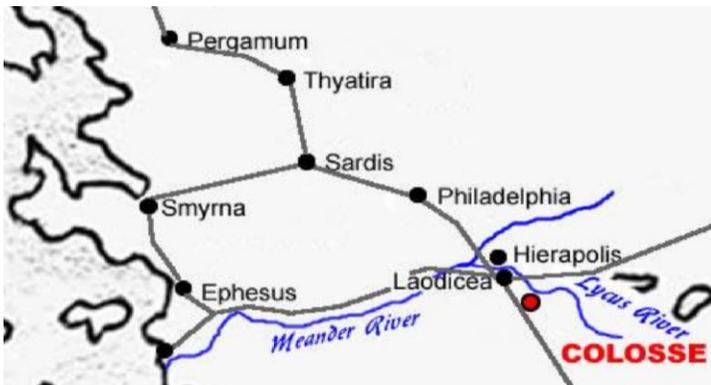
- Six men greet the Colossae church
 - Three are Jews identified as “men of the circumcision” – Aristarchus, Mark, Jesus (Justus)
 - Three are Gentiles (listed below) – Epaphras, Luke, Demas
- 5 of these 6 are also included in the greeting in the book of Philemon verses 23-24 – ***“Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends greetings to you, and so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas, and Luke, my fellow workers.”*** The only one not mentioned is Jesus (Justus) the Jew.
- These three Jewish men are referred to as:
 - “the only men of the circumcision” – indicating they are the only three Jews who have picked up Paul’s vision to reach the Gentiles.

- “fellow workers of the kingdom of God” – they are not mere Jewish believers, but the labor with Paul in his ministry
- “been a comfort to me” – the word here from “comfort” is a medical term for a tonic taken from opium and was a drug called paregoric which was a medication extracted as a solution from opium to be used as a cough suppressant, a pain killer and to treat diarrhea
- Aristarchus –
 - A Jew
 - A Macedonian from Thessalonica
 - Likely came to the faith during Paul’s turbulent visit to Thessalonica (Acts 17:1-9)
 - Aristarchus may have been one of the original recipients of the letters of First and Second Thessalonians.
 - Aristarchus was in the middle of the Ephesus riot in Acts 19:29
 - Aristarchus traveled with Paul to Jerusalem in Acts 20:4
 - Aristarchus was still with Paul when he left Cesarea as a prisoner for Rome and he accompanied Paul on the ship to Rome (Acts 27:2)
- Aristarchus is called a “fellow prisoner” which is not referring to a legal prisoner, but a “prisoner of war” (also used in Romans 16:7 of Andronicus and Junia). → It is reasonable to assume the Aristarchus has stuck with Paul from the Jewish uprising that chased Paul out of Thessalonica through the years in Ephesus that resulted in the riot through the Corinthian church rebellion to Paul’s arrest on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem to imprisonment in Caesarea and onto this Roman imprisonment that included the Mediterranean shipwreck!!
- Mark –
 - A Jew
 - John Mark of Acts that abandoned Paul and Barnabas. (Acts 13:5 and Acts 15:38)
 - From a wealthy family in Jerusalem
 - Mother was Mary of Jerusalem that owned the house where the early Jerusalem church met and the Last Supper was hosted and the outpouring of the Spirit occurred. (Acts 12:12)
 - Mark 14:51-52 may be John Mark escaping from Jesus’ arrest
- Mark wrote the Gospel of Mark from Rome and had access to both Peter and Paul, plus first hand experience with Jesus and the events in Jerusalem.
- Paul may be giving written approval of John Mark after their falling out earlier.
- Jesus (Justice) –
 - A Jew
 - All we know of Jesus (Justice) is here
 - Jesus was a common name. A Hellenized form of Joshua used by the Jews until the second century when the use of the name complete stops.
 - Like Paul had both a Greek (Paul) and a Jewish (Saul) name, so did Jesus (Justice) with Jesus being the Jewish name (a form of Joshua) and Justice being the Greek name.

4:12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a servant of Christ Jesus, greets you, always struggling on your behalf in his prayers, that you may stand mature and fully assured in all the will of God.

- Ephaphras –
 - “one of you” – is the same as said of Onesimus...likely a believer from Colossae
 - “a slave of Christ Jesus”
 - “struggling” for the Colossians “in prayer” – the Greek word “struggling” is from the Greek word “agon_____” and has already been used in Col. 1:29 and 2:1.
 - A related word is used of Jesus’ praying in the Garden. In Luke 22:44.
 - Same word is used for prayer in Acts 12:5 and Romans 15:30

- It would appear that Ephaphras was praying along with Paul for the Colossians maturity and God's will in their life as in Colossians 1:9-11 and 1:28-2:3. Here Paul says Ephaphras is praying for:
 - “you may stand mature”
 - “fully assured”
 - “in all the will of God”



4:13 For I bear him witness that he has worked hard for you and for those in Laodicea and in Hierapolis.

- Ephaphras has “worked hard” for the people in the churches of Colossae, Laodicea and Hierapolis.

4:14 Luke the beloved physician greets you, as does Demas.

- Luke –
- Demas – deserted Paul in 2 Tim. 4:10 because he loved this world

NOTE: Timothy sends no greeting?

4:15 Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

- It is possible in the wording here in the Greek that there were two churches in Laodicea:
 - The Church of the Brothers at Laodicea
 - The Church that meets in the House of Nympha

4:16 And when this letter has been read among you, have it also read in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.

- Much speculation is included in the discussion about this letter that had been sent to the Laodiceans
- It is possible that Tychicus is carrying this letter as well.

4:17 And say to Archippus, “See that you fulfill the ministry that you have received in the Lord.”

- Archippus knows what his “ministry” is
- We assume it is the leadership of the church of Colossae, but this is speculative.

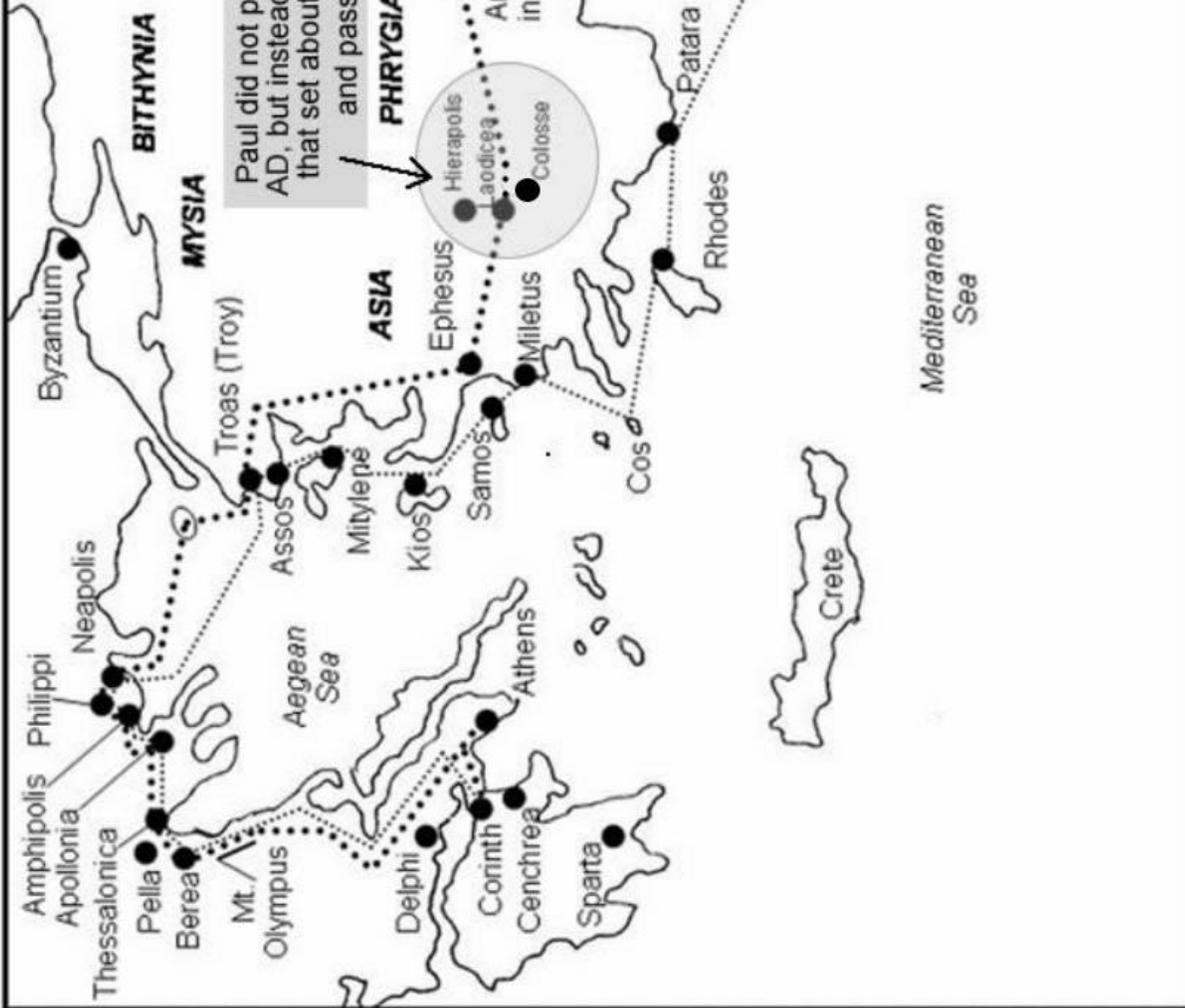
4:18 I, Paul, write this greeting with my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

- A scribe, possibly Mark, has been writing Paul's dictation
- Now Paul takes the pen in his chained hands and signs his name.

Paul, 53 - 57 AD

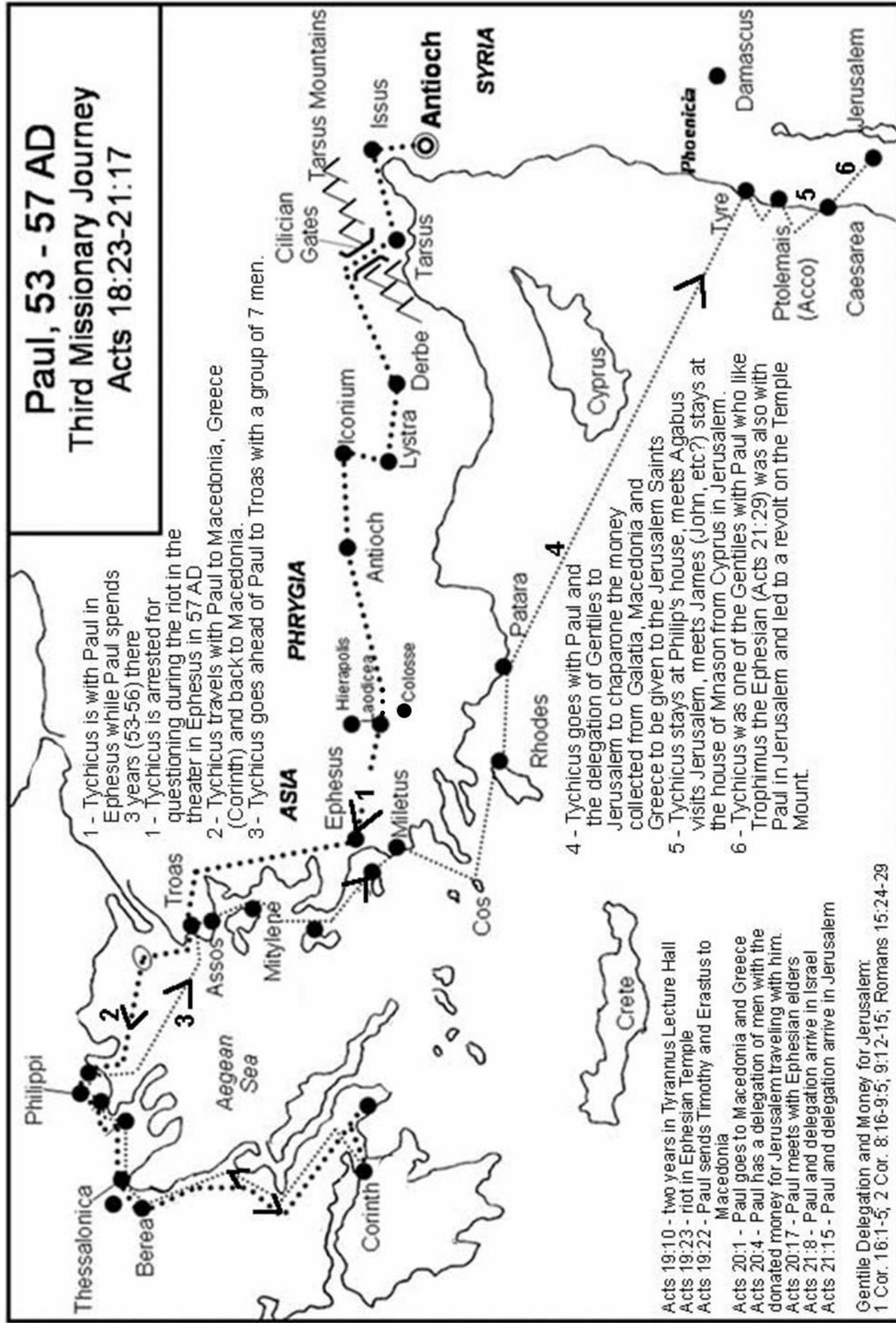
Third Missionary Journey

Acts 18:23-21:17



Paul did not pass through Colosse in 53 AD, but instead traveled on the main road that set about 10 miles north of Colosse and passed through Laodicea

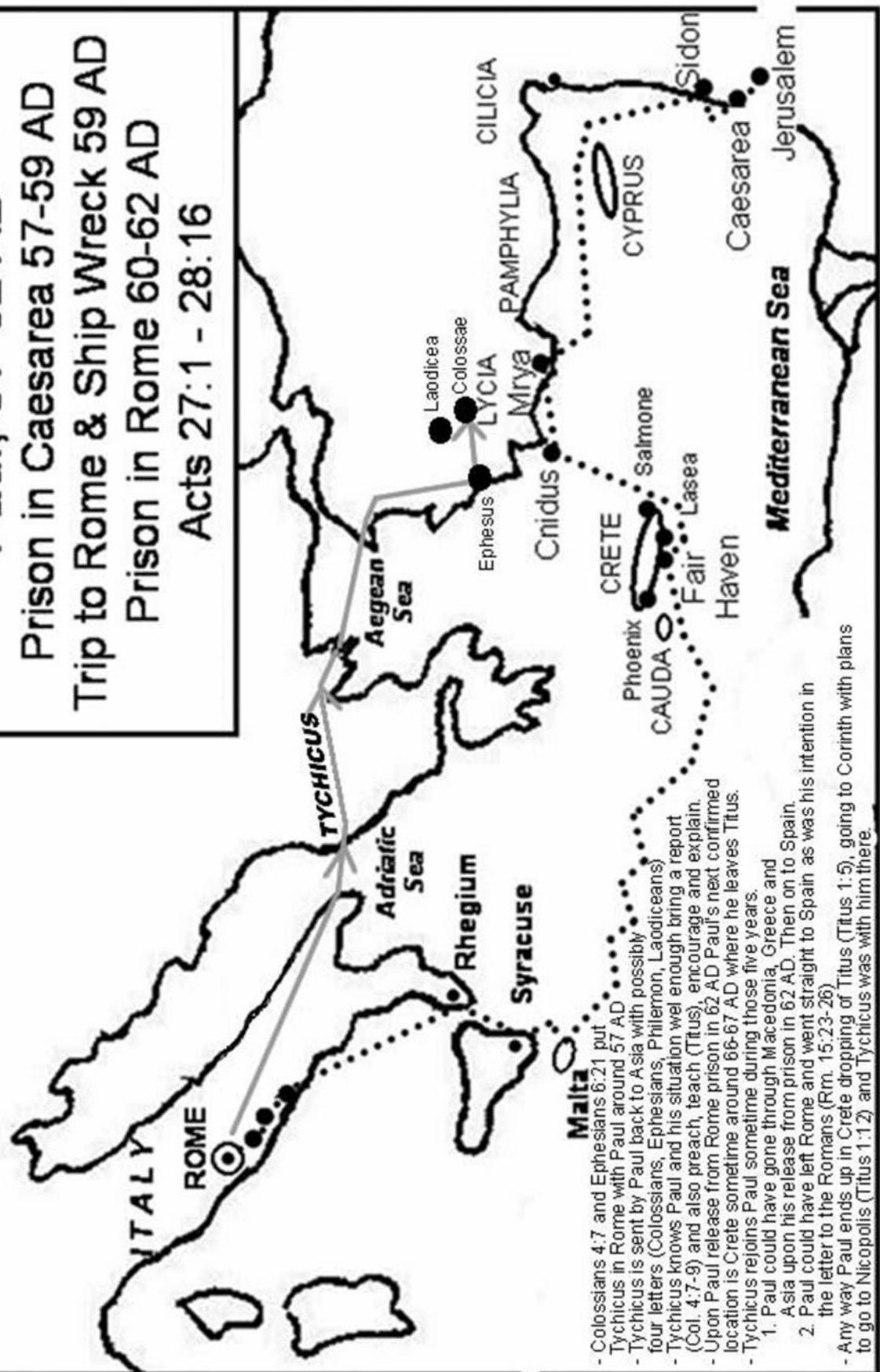
Paul, 53 - 57 AD Third Missionary Journey Acts 18:23-21:17



Paul, 57-62 AD

Prison in Caesarea 57-59 AD
 Trip to Rome & Ship Wreck 59 AD

Prison in Rome 60-62 AD
 Acts 27:1 - 28:16

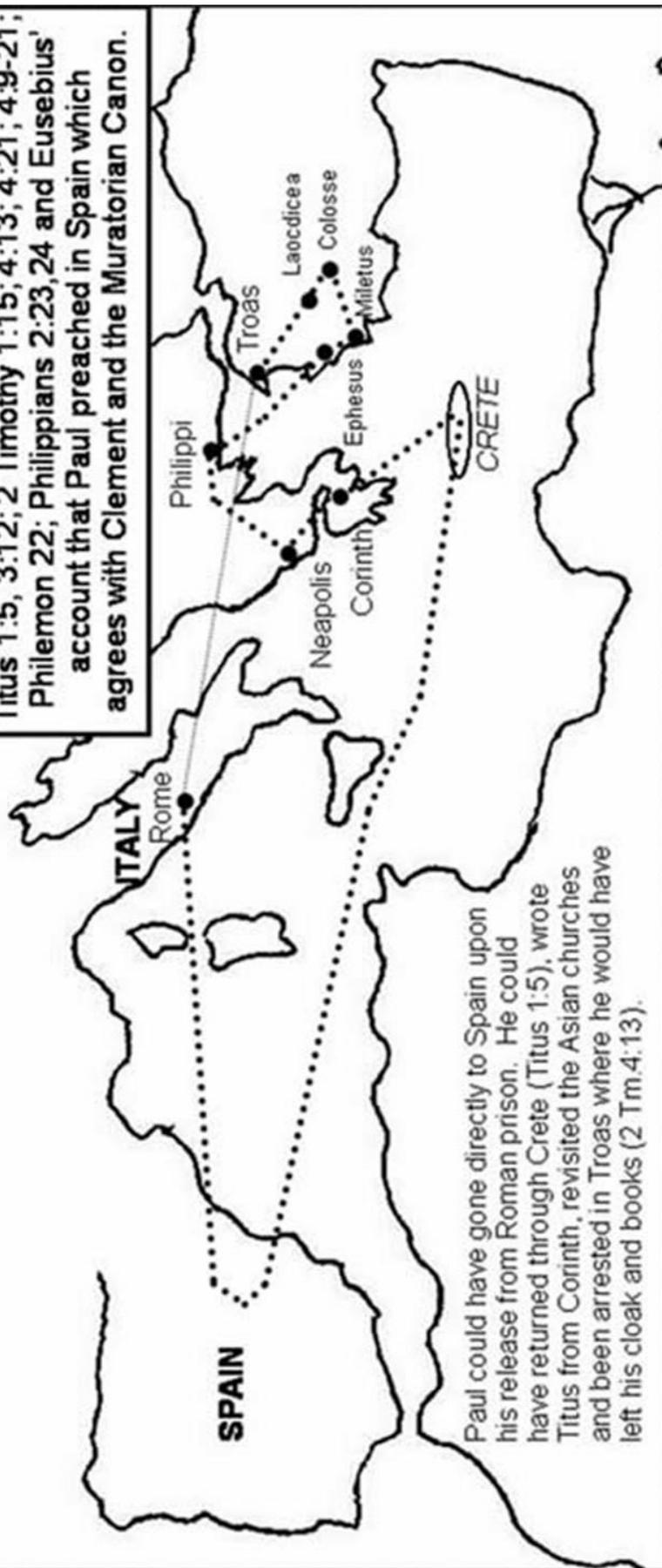


- Colossians 4:7 and Ephesians 6:21 put Tychicus in Rome with Paul around 57 AD
- Tychicus is sent by Paul back to Asia with possibly four letters (Colossians, Ephesians, Philimon, Laodiceans)
- Tychicus knows Paul and his situation well enough to bring a report (Col. 4:7-9) and also preach, teach (Titus), encourage and explain.
- Upon Paul's release from Rome in 62 AD Paul's next confirmed location is Crete sometime around 66-67 AD where he leaves Titus.
- Tychicus rejoins Paul sometime during those five years.
 1. Paul could have gone through Macedonia, Greece and Asia upon his release from prison in 62 AD. Then on to Spain.
 2. Paul could have left Rome and went straight to Spain as was his intention in the letter to the Romans (Rm. 15:23-26)
- Any way Paul ends up in Crete dropping of Titus (Titus 1:5), going to Corinth with plans to go to Nicopolis (Titus 1:12) and Tychicus was with him there.

Paul, 62 - 68 AD

This map represents a possible itinerary for Paul after his release from Roman prison in 62 AD and his death in Rome during the fall of 67 or spring of 68. This is speculated from: Romans 15:24, 28; Titus 1:5, 3:12; 2 Timothy 1:15; 4:13; 4:21; 4:9-21; Philemon 22; Philippians 2:23, 24 and Eusebius' account that Paul preached in Spain which agrees with Clement and the Muratorian Canon.

- Tychicus is with Paul in Corinth when Paul writes Titus (Titus 3:12)
- Paul's considered Tychicus capable of replacing Titus in the oversight of the difficult Crete (Greeks on a Mediterranean Island) church.
- Tychicus is with Paul when Paul is arrested in Troas and taken to Roman prison for the second time or Tychicus joins Paul in prison.
- This time Paul sends Tychicus to Ephesus to replace Timothy (2 Timothy 4:12)



Paul could have gone directly to Spain upon his release from Roman prison. He could have returned through Crete (Titus 1:5), wrote Titus from Corinth, revisited the Asian churches and been arrested in Troas where he would have left his cloak and books (2 Tm. 4:13).