

## *Colossians and Ephesians*

### *I. Prison Epistles, along with Philemon and Philippians*

- A. Sent from prison (Eph.3:1; 4:1; 6:20/Col.4:3,10,18)
- B. Carried by Tychicus (Eph.6:21/ Col.4:7) Onesimus accompanied Tychicus to Colosse.
- C. Imprisoned where? Rome [AD 60-62]? or Ephesus [AD 53-56]? (1 Cor.15:32/ 2 Cor.1:8-9; 11:23)
  - 1. Where did Philemon encounter Paul?
  - 2. Between what points were so many trips made by Epaphras and Tychicus?
  - 3. The imprisonment of Epaphras (Philemon 23) and Aristarchus (Col.4:10) with Paul?
  - 4. Paul hoped soon to visit Colosse (Philemon 22)

### *II. Shared Materials (Eph.=155 verses; Col.=95 verses; 78 similar verses between them)*

- A. Similar to the relationship of Galatians and Romans
  - 1. The shorter books written first, against present dangers of heretics
  - 2. The longer books followed as refined expositions on the major themes
- B. Supplementing each other
  - 1. Colossians about Christ, the Head
  - 2. Ephesians about the Church, the Body

### *III. Colossians*

- A. Colosse was not evangelized by Paul, who had never been there (1:8; 2:1), but was reached during Paul's three-year ministry in Ephesus (Acts 19:10).
- B. Epaphras, a Colossian (4:13), who was now a prisoner with Paul (Philemon 23) had evangelized them.
- C. Paul received a report from Epaphras that the church was doing well (2:5), and, intending to return Onesimus to Colosse, decided to write a letter warning about various false teachings.
- D. Was there a "Colossian Heresy"?
  - 1. Judaism? (N.T. Wright) or Jewish Mysticism? (F.F. Bruce)
  - 2. Syncretism, or separate heresies?
    - a. Greek philosophy, possibly Gnosticism (2:8-10)
    - b. Jewish legalism: circumcision, diet, festivals (2:11-17)
    - c. Mystery cults and asceticism (2:18-23)
- E. Paul's antidote: The sufficiency of Christ — 1:15-19; 2:9-10

#### *IV. Ephesians*

- A. A circular epistle? There is no “in Ephesus” in 1:1; and the letter lacks personal greetings.
- B. Paul’s message: Jews and Gentiles are equal and one in Christ  
(Similar to the early portion of Romans, but addressed to Gentiles, while Romans addresses Jews)
- C. Images of the Church
  - 1. People of God (1:13, 14,18; 2:19)
  - 2. Family (1:5; 2:19; 3:6; 4:6; 5:1)
  - 3. Body (1:23; 2:16; 3:6; 4:4, 15-16, 25; 5:30)
  - 4. Temple (2:20-22)
  - 5. Bride (5:22-33)
  - 6. Army (6:10-18)
- D. Emphasis on unity (4:1-16)
- E. “Sit” (chs.1-3), “Walk” (ch.4-6:9), “Stand” (6:10ff)
- F. “In the heavenlies”
  - 1. Blessings (1:3)
  - 2. Christ’s position (1:20)
  - 3. Our position (2:6)
  - 4. Principalities and powers (3:10)
  - 5. Hosts of wickedness (6:12)

#### *V. Commonalities between the two letters*

- A. “In Christ,” “In Him,” “In Whom” ( 18x in Ephesians; 9x in Colossians)
- B. “Principalities and powers” (Eph.3:10; 6:12 / Col.1:16; 2:15)
- C. All things to be reconciled in Christ (Eph.1:10 / Col.1:20)
- D. Prayers for revelation, knowledge, and strength for the church (Eph.1:16ff; 3:14-21 / Col.1:9-12)
- E. “Dead in trespasses...made alive” (Eph.2:1, 5-6 / Col.2:13)
- F. “the mystery” (9x in Ephesians; 4x in Colossians)
- G. “Old Man” Vs. “New Man” (Eph.2:15; 4:22, 24 / Col.3:9-10)
- H. “psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs” (Eph.5:19 / Col.3:16)
- I. The “household code” (Eph.5:22—6:9 / Col.3:18—4:1)